AMERICA IN FRANCE

FREDERICK PALMER

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AMERICA IN FRANCE

BOOKS BY FREDERICK PALMER

GOING TO WAR IN GREECE
THE WAYS OF THE SERVICE
THE VAGABOND
WITH KUROKI IN MANCHURIA
OVER THE PASS
THE LAST SHOT
MY YEAR OF THE GREAT WAR
THE OLD BLOOD
MY SECOND YEAR OF THE WAR
WITH OUR FACES IN THE LIGHT
AMERICA IN FRANCE

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BY

MAJOR FREDERICK PALMER

Author of "The Last Shot," "My Year of the Great War,"
"With Our Faces in the Light," etc.

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To

THE MEMORY OF OUR SOLDIERS WHO HAVE FALLEN IN FRANCE IN ORDER THAT THEIR COMRADES WHO SURVIVE MAY MAKE A BETTER WORLD

TO THE READER

Upon our entry into the war, I became one of the band of reserve officers who might do special service while they envied the men of the training camps their youth. My duties allowed me a wide range of information and observation with our expeditionary force in France from its inception. Under the spell of our marvelous achievement, which is the greatest story any American has ever had to tell, I have written about it as I knew it through its phases of building, training, fighting and of unremitting effort until we had won the Saint Mihiel salient and broken the old German line in the Argonne battle. Readers of *My Year of the Great War* and *My Second Year of the War* will have between two covers, if they choose, my third and fourth years.

FREDERICK PALMER,
Major, S.C., U.S.A.

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AMERICA IN FRANCE

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I

PERSHING GOES TO FRANCE

General Pershing at the War Department—Commander of the American Expeditionary Forces—Modest beginnings of our greatest national enterprise—Specialists in war take command—The American crusader—Difficult even for the French to understand our distinterestedness—General Pershing and his staff sail from New York—Beginning staff work on shipboard—An American General reviews British troops—Ovations in Paris—The real General Pershing.

It was in the May days of our early war emotion and war effort, after public imagination had responded to Marshal Joffre's call for American troops to fight beside his veterans. Long lines of private cars waited on the sidings of the Union Station in Washington while their owners were seeking to serve the government for a dollar a year. The word coördination had not yet become the bandied symbol of the thing most needed and most desired in harnessing the Niagara of our national energy into voltage.

Anyone passing along the corridors of the War Department who looked into the small room opposite the Chief of Staff's office might have taken the Major General and other officers within as engaged in some routine departmental work unless he had

heard someone remark: "Pershing is in there, getting ready to go to France." Such was the beginning, in a quiet office, isolated from the throbbing activity of Washington, of our greatest adventure in arms and our greatest national enterprise; and the modesty of it was in keeping with the lack of any large body of troops to send to Europe or the ships for their transport.

Our public did not then conceive of a complete Russian military collapse, let alone a German offensive sweeping over the devastated areas of the Somme which the Allies had lately won. Joffre's candid message about the situation had not disturbed the serene conviction of many Americans that our weight in the balance would drop the scales of victory for the Allies. He was the commander of trained armies born of military traditions imbibed through generations in face of the enemy's frontier. We were a people who had built fortunes and vast enterprises, homes, schools and universities, conquered wildernesses, taken riches out of the earth and set deserts abloom, but with the traditions of eight years of fighting which had made us a nation and of the fratricidal conflict in which our manhood had proved its fortitude and courage as a reminder to later generations, emigrants or home born, of what should be expected of them if they were to be worthy of our inheritance in some future trial. In 1861, few men foresaw the great armies which we should have to raise before a decision was reached. In May, 1917, no one thought of an army of a million men in France except in the imaginative flights which were the privilege of all in that period.

When you are ill you turn to the doctor. When you are at war you turn to the trained soldier. It is as easy to forget the one when you are well as to forget the other in time of peace. Although we were at war uniforms were rarely seen in our streets. In the training camps chosen young men were learning the rudiments of drill in order to become officers who should train troops to go to France under Pershing.

Our regular army had hardly been a part of our national life; it was a supplementary official necessity which we accepted along with our taxes. Suddenly, the man trained in war had become the man of the hour; "he is a regular," the tribute to a type of professional specialism which made the owner of a private car envious. Upon the way that our little band of experts molded the raw material of our manhood and organized our resources in their support depended the result of our effort, a thought that will be running through all these pages, which deal with the triumph of men as men and how they were undismayed when they lacked resources and how they utilized the resources which were forthcoming.

In the Washington hotel lobbies, where the expert in railroad building and the expert in steel-making each respected specialism, it was only incidental to our traditions that they should think that an army was a force of armed men without considering how it was organized and directed. They lived in another world from that of the officers of our General Staff in the rooms along the corridors from where Pershing had begun his organization. You thought of the large, technically trained, experienced staffs

of our large corporations in comparison with the meager personnel which was to organize an infinitely larger corporation, whose ledger account is reckoned in casualties in battle. These officers had no illusions; they understood how, in cold logic, the German Staff had reasoned that ruthless submarine warfare against Britain would gain results more than offsetting any force which we might bring against Germany before she planned to win a decision at arms. For war is a soldier's business, and our soldiers realized the immensity and the complicated difficulties of Pershing's task.

Given time and they did not lack faith in the outcome. To have lacked faith would have been un-American and shown their inappreciation of the forces that built our skyscrapers, our factories, our colleges and the spirit of our democracy and our cause. It would be confessing distrust in American manhood drilling at the training camps, in themselves and their own programme; as, happily, in this war we had taken expert advice. We were to have a national draft; specialists in war were to be given the authority to form an army along sound professional lines. The architect's plans for the structure were right; the thing now was the building. If Joffre were a marshal of accomplishment, Pershing was a marshal of potentialities.

The instructions which the General received before he left the little room to sail were of an historic simplicity. He was to proceed with his staff to Europe, there "to command all the land forces of the United States operating in continental Europe

and in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland," and to "establish, after consultation with the French War Office, all necessary bases, lines of communication, etc., and make all the incidental arrangements essential to active participation at the front."

Back of this charter of authority were all the principles that the President had enunciated in his messages. These are none the less live and true for iteration. They have been the inspiration of all our effort in France. No crusader of old went forth with a cause freer from guile than the American born of European blood returning to fight in Europe a battle which cemented a kinship of right in the world, after we had kept faith with our peaceful intentions by not preparing great armaments.

Often the French villagers asked our soldiers: "Why are you here? What do you want? Is it colonies? Is it power in the affairs of Europe?" The questions were natural from races rooted in their soil, with its defense their instinctive self-interest. Through all the months of labor in France the wonder of our being in France never ceased when thoughts took a certain turn. When they took another, the answer was, "Where else should we be?" Our troops would return with no tribute from victory; with only national consciences clear.

When and on what ship was Pershing going? Curiosity pried at the curtain of military secrecy. Men occupying rooms in the War Department adjoining the General's did not know, but the hotel lobbies knew. The embarkation was matter-of-fact enough from a government tender to the S. S. *Baltic*

in a May rain off Staten Island; and the next day the staff went to work—Commander, Chief of Staff, and other staff heads, and all Colonels, Majors, Captains, Lieutenants, interpreters and field clerks, orderlies and messengers—one hundred and fifty in all. A few were reservists who had jumped into their uniforms before sailing and were uncertain whether you saluted superiors on shipboard or not. Others wore the colors of campaigns in Cuba, the Philippines and China, and a few the red ribbon that indicated an Indian campaign, which were to mingle with the colors of South Africa and India, of Madagascar and Morocco, and those of the Military Cross, the D. S. O., the *Croix de Guerre* and *Médaille Militaire*. We were proud of our one handsome gray-haired officer who had won the Medal of Honor from Congress and ready to compare him with any winner of the Victoria Cross.

Many of the officers had never been in Europe. Their knowledge of the European war was gained from the reports of our military observers and general reading. Late in the third year of the war they were going abroad as leaders who were to apply the experience of Europe's masters to their own army. Anyone who expected that their attitude, in keeping with our generally accepted characteristic of self-assertion, would be that they proposed to "show Europe how" reckoned without the consideration that their professional training warned them that they had much to learn.

Oh, those classes in French! The interpreters organized the officers into groups of different grades, from those well-grounded in West Point book

French to the ones who did not know how to ask the way or for something to eat, while arms sore from vaccination, and too much experience with Spanish on the border were offered as excuses for not immediately acquiring a Parisian accent. General Pershing was in the first grade; he had once studied French in France. Lectures on bombing and sanitation were delivered in the dining saloon to fill in any spare time when an idler might have been playing shuffleboard.

The American destroyers, which came out to escort us at the edge of the submarine zone, were a reminder that the service which is always ready for action in the ships which it has and the crews to man them was striking the only battle blows which we had yet delivered at the enemy. Without destroyer protection there would be no American army in Europe. Ever, the destroyer, weaving its watchful course of guardianship in all weathers, will remain the symbol of a devout gratitude to all men who have crossed the Atlantic in this war. Its sight is as welcome as that of a policeman if you have a burglar in the house.

When the General reviewed the Guard of Honor on the pier at Liverpool, of course someone said, "This is historic." History had been too abundantly in the making of late years for one to be certain of values; yet it was a great moment when the leader of an American army come to fight beside British soldiers stepped ashore on English soil. It was the more important as there was no ceremony in London except an audience by the King, much to the relief of our little band of pioneers, which

was off to the War Office where each one was to meet some expert in his own line, with no lessening of his conviction of what a lot he had to learn.

In France, however, there must be ceremony. Why had Joffre asked for the prompt dispatch of troops? For the immediate effect on French *morale*. Therefore, France refused to consider the modesty of a simple American soldier who wished particularly to avoid martial display when he was bringing only a staff to Europe. She needed the stimulus of the actuality of American soldiers on her soil, which was more convincing proof that we were in this war in earnest than ten thousand columns of cablegrams about our preparations at home. Ovations were the spontaneous outcome of Parisian feeling which should communicate its reassuring thrill to every village from Brittany to the Alps. General Lafayette's fame resplendently revived. The French schoolboy was learning as much about him as about the American. He had gone to America to help us; Pershing came to France to help the French.

Not since the war had begun had the Parisian spirit, stilled to breathless silence in the days of the Marne, breathing free again in relief after the victory, and restrained ever since by the drain of life and the pressure of the grim monotonous processes of sacrifice, broken forth in a manner worthy of welcoming a marshal returning from decisive victory. Our officers had no idea of what was in store for them. They were as embarrassed as girl graduates when, on the way from the station, the crowds surrounded their cars and threw flowers at them.

" Look pleasant, please! " called an American to a colonel.

" Only then," said the colonel, " did I realize that I was sitting as stiff as a wooden Indian and looking as serious as a Puritan at the benediction—it was so staggering to be a hero of Paris."

Our General found himself bowing from balconies to cheering multitudes and the recipient of attentions which were once reserved for visiting monarchs. Fortunately, he had traveled much and studiously and met all manner of men. Within the army the distinction among his fellows which he had already won before he left West Point gave him the opportunities of varied service which ranged from the General Staff in Washington to building roads and schools in the jungle and ruling the Moros, who called him " Datto," followed by eleven years of command experience. He had been of the group of attachés with Kuroki's army in Manchuria who were the eyes of the armies of the world in observing the first great war fought with modern arms. There I first knew him and Captain Peyton C. March, who later became our Chief of Staff. Colonel Enoch H. Crowder, who was our senior attaché, was to be responsible for our National Draft, as Provost Marshal General. The others included Sir Ian Hamilton, who led the Gallipoli expedition; Captain von Etzel, who was to command a German corps at Verdun; Colonel Corvissart, who was to command a corps opposite von Etzel's; Captain Hoffman, very guttural and very Prussian, who became the representative of the German Staff at the Brest-Litovsk Peace Con-

ference and engineered the collapse of Russia; and Captain Caviglia, who was to distinguish himself as an army commander in the battle of the Piave.

We were to have, then, as our leader in France a man thoroughly trained for his task since the day he left Missouri to go to West Point, intrinsically American, and representative of our institutions. No soldier could have criticized his speeches for length and no diplomat for lack of appreciation of his position as the ambassador of the hundred millions. France looked him over, and liked his firm jaw, his smile, his straight figure and his straight way of looking at everyone he met. He brought cheer and promise of the only aid which France could understand, that of an armed force which fights on land. For France is of the soil and vineyards and well-tilled fields and thrifty peasants, and thinks little of the sea.

Our officers remarked with dry American humor that they were receiving all the honors due immortal heroism before they had done any fighting. The realization of the long months of waiting before we should have troops ready to go into the line put the double edge to their appreciation of the welcome by thoughtful Americans in the midst of the cheers.

II

OUR GREAT PROJECT

First American uniforms in Paris—Modest headquarters on the Rue de Constantine—Where all Americans in Paris flocked—Crowded quarters—Difficulties of making a start—Laying plans for a great army—Where should our soldiers fight, train, disembark?—Our national characteristic of thinking "big."

OTHER pioneers had been in France in behalf of the Allied cause before our staff. We had given freely of our money and effort. Our doctors and nurses manned hospitals that we had equipped. The fliers of the Lafayette Escadrille were a little legion of American chivalry fighting in the air; and hundreds of drivers of the two American ambulance associations coursed the roads back of the French front.

They wore uniforms which distinguished them as Americans and they carried our flag in spirit or by courtesy, but their uniforms did not have U. S. on the collar and the flag was not official. The uniforms now seen in the streets were official; and the authority of the nation raised the flag at the new army headquarters in Paris, which, in its magic symbolism that where formerly some Americans had been striking Germany, now all were, was the harbinger of American flags appearing in the remotest corners of France; of busy hours for needlewomen who were sewing the stars of the States,

while the Red, White and Blue of their own tri-color made the stripes and the field of ours.

The modesty of the premises which the staff occupied in Paris was in keeping with the modesty of the beginnings in Washington. Instead of taking palaces or hotels on the Champs-Élysées, the officer who had the arrangements in charge sought the other side of the Seine, where he took two private houses in the Rue de Constantine overlooking the Invalides, as if the one thing that the A. E. F. wished to do after the furore of its Parisian reception was to escape further publicity.

In the corner house, No. 31, General Pershing settled down in his office, which was the corner room upstairs, and began his service in France. In the adjoining room the Chief of Staff had his desk and in the one on the other side the aides had theirs. The atmosphere of the aides' room was more like that of a political candidate's anteroom than an army headquarters. Every American in Paris seemed to have some reason for calling. Why not? For three years he had longed for the day when he could hold up his head with the thought that his country was in the war. Usually, he considered it necessary to see the General in person.

At first, an orderly tried to hold the wooden gate which was put up as a check at the foot of the stairs, where, in other days, a servant had opened the door for callers and to receive cards. The orderly had learned some fortitude in Mexico, but quailed and yielded before this onslaught. An officer, a gallant and polite gentleman who could alternate his attitude between that of a diplomatic usher and a traffic

policeman, took his place. While he was considering the application of one caller, others would slip by him to advance on the General's aides.

It was amazing the number of people the General saw; amazing how any work was done in the limited space of No. 31. Young America in France wanted commissions in the army; old America in France had advice to offer; the pressure on the War Department was repeated in Paris. The small room over the stairs held a group of French officers who were the intermediaries, the *liaison,* in all the relations of the pioneers with the official world of France, arranging for the innumerable conferences required for co-operation with the French, when necessarily all our action was related to French military policy.

In other parts of the building the rest of the staff overflowed kitchens, bedrooms and butler's pantry. Two or three officers occupied the same desk at the same time. A captain who thought that he had a desk of his own, when he left it for half an hour found his papers pushed to one side and a major in his place when he returned. A score or more of newspaper correspondents called every day in answer to the eager curiosity of the people at home.

There was relief from the congestion when the Quartermaster's Department and other branches moved into the Hôtel St. Anne, Rue St. Anne, where desks took the place of bedsteads, while everybody there as at the Rue de Constantine was on the jump with a French interpreter at his elbow. Loss of motion for the want of supplies because of the limitations of army forms and of lack of knowledge of the language, was an inevitable affliction to a staff

which in answer to a hurry call had rushed across the Atlantic. Our personnel, which might have seemed large in Washington, became ridiculously small in the theater of the European war. Hundreds of problems buffeted and laid siege to the pioneers, who were trying to familiarize themselves with conditions at the same time that they organized for immediate future requirements. Each branch must lay out its programme and these programmes must be combined into a whole.

For the first time the military secrets of the Allies were open to us. Officers of the Operations Section could look into every detail of the operations of the French and British armies, familiarizing themselves with the infernally complicated system of tactics of trench warfare. They could sit in a battalion commander's post of commandment or at corps headquarters and watch the routine of command. The Medical Corps, without supplies, could observe the care of the wounded, from the stretcher-bearers to the base hospitals. The signal corps, without supplies, might follow the many strands of wire along the walls of a single communication trench and gain some idea of the material for communications which our army would require. Officers of the Intelligence Section could stretch their imagination as to forces needed by meeting the company of experts at a Grand Headquarters—experts in language, in questioning prisoners, in censorship, in counter-espionage, in all the business of keeping information from the enemy and gaining information about him. As for the Quartermaster, reserve the bulk of your sympathy for him. Everybody seemed to want some-

thing from him which he could not supply, when he had brought no more baggage to Europe than any other staff officer. He might buy what he could in the open market, and bid those who wrote "It is requested" to wait until our transports arrived.

In any army the inspiration of action comes from its leader. His decision is final, upon the advice of his generals and his staff. He links all the strands together under his driving hand; he is the ultimate authority in the provision of any programme next to that of the Secretary of War and the President. In the days when submarine ravages were heavy, when our armies were in the making, when Russia was still in the war and British confidence high after the perfect "limited-objective" battle of Messines, when many people thought that peace would arrive in another six months, and when our camps at home were still busy with the primer lessons of soldiering, General Pershing laid his plans for the patient building of a great, thorough army organization in France and an adequate plant to maintain it. Time was to justify his vision, as time more than justified Kitchener's vision of a three years' war.

Where should an American force go into the line? Where should it be trained in France? The bases established for its maintenance must be more or less permanent, as a modern army is tied fast to its source of supply. What ports were we to use? Harbor space was a first consideration, for we must have ample gateways for an ample enterprise.

The question of training brought up the problems where errors may be most glaringly costly; the

preparation of soldiers for the test of battle. Difference of systems, variation of ideas, national psychology and changing political and military conditions all played a part. It will be recollected that the French Staff had strongly advocated, early in the war, not only the introduction of French Staff control into British units, but even the introduction of British battalions into French regiments, for the reason that the French Staff was experienced in the handling of large bodies of troops and had ample reserves in trained officers, owing to the application of military training to all classes of French manhood for two generations. The British could not accept this view, even if the military advantage were granted, owing to causes inherent in pride of country and in the traditions of a self-reliant people.

It was only natural that the French should want to apply the same system to us and that the British should consider that the bond of common language alone was the unanswerable argument that we should train with them. Either of two gallant hosts begged us to become a member of his family. It was only human that the British master and the French master should want the American as his disciple; a proof of either's faith in himself and his system. Each one wanted the privilege of instructing the novice, the giant beginner; of exerting his influence upon the young nation from over the seas which was bringing its legions to bear for the first time in an European war, in violation of Washington's policy for a struggling infant now become of elephantine strength.

Full compliance with the request of either side

that our troops should be introduced into its army in small units might mean that we should have no distinct staff, or bases, or lines of communication, while our training camps at home became recruiting depots for British and French forces. In that event, would the most important unit of war, the man in the ranks, develop the maximum of power against the enemy when he was not a part of a distinct American army? It is a question which will recur again; a question which sinks the plummet deep in human psychology and in our part in the war. Our live national sympathy for France, the needs of French *morale* and many other considerations associated us with the French army, while instructions and wisdom kept our forces integral under the tutelage of the French, who generously offered their best officers and troops as our teachers.

Nature was niggardly in supplying western France with large harbors; and her harbor masters never contemplated such an enterprise as ours demanding anchorage and wharf space. The value of New York Bay and the piers of the North River transferred to a point between Boulogne and Bordeaux is something beyond conjecture. Already the British occupied the northern ports in maintaining their replacements, in feeding their immense army, in caring for their wounded, in supplying all the material for the offensive which they were conducting.

We must turn to other harbors not already occupied. If there were not enough piers we must build them. If there was not enough anchorage space we must dredge it. The officers who were

dashing about France in the company of French officers, going over French reports and suggestions, were dreaming great dreams as the pleasant landscape whisked by—dreams of forming the plan which was to be the basis of all our future effort in France and our effort at home in preparing for war in France.

I know of nothing more in keeping with our national character of seeing "big" and thinking "big" than the visions which we put into cold official recommendations when the submarine ravages were at their worst and we had no illusions about the supply of American shipping for transport. A year later, with a deep understanding of their foresight, we could the better appreciate how officers who had been dealing with companies of infantry and supplies for the Mexican border expanded their conception to our needs in France. It was not for them to consider that the sudden end of the war would stop their building. They had seen enough to know that Germany was far from beaten, and they proposed to prepare a force which should be equal to our part in assisting the Allies to compass her defeat.

"Any consideration of operations," said the recommendations to Washington, "must include offensive operations on a large scale, which would require twenty combat divisions for action." These and all the personnel of supply necessary to support them, after studying the French and the British systems, "must look toward a million men, the smallest unit which, in modern war, will be a complete fighting organization." At home, the plan

should contemplate the completion in two years of a programme for three million men.

The officers in the crowded rooms in the Rue de Constantine, when we had not two platoons of infantry or a single gun in France, having outlined their project for the millions as an indication of what was expected of Washington, then worked out their tables of organization and their system for replacement, and the different types of schools required in France and in the States to teach officers of our new army not yet commissioned and soldiers not yet in uniform the latest technique in every branch.

There, within a stone's throw of the Invalides and in sight of Napoleon's tomb, these men of from thirty-five to forty-five years of age of our little General Staff, with the help of sober field clerks who ran the typewriters, created armies out of the youths still walking our streets, transferred them across the Atlantic, marched them and fought them against the Kaiser's armies, not in War College theory, but in abundant conviction that their projects could be realized. A von Tirpitz or a Ludendorff, looking over their shoulders, might have said, "You may as well imagine you are playing ball with the stars." But Napoleon, who had created armies out of republican crowds, could have said, "I, too, dreamed." Whatever Napoleon come to life might think, aren't we the people who lay out the streets of a town across the fields and name them all before a house is built? How old is Chicago? How long since Kansas City was a trading post?

We must not only have ports, but great ware-

houses, depots and regulating stations—everything across the Atlantic that the British had across the Channel. In conference with the French, we studied the map of France as railroad builders and town builders had studied the geography and the resources of the West. Instead of pioneering in a new country with everything at hand for building, we were to pioneer in an old land, whose resources were under the strain of war. Were we to fight in France, we must bring our own supplies with us and in our own transport as surely as the Forty-Niners had to bring theirs.

With the size of the army contemplated in a given time known, we could prepare for its requirements in a given time. With the sector of the front we were to occupy known, officers could go about saying with an Aladdin confidence, "Here is where we shall build a twenty-thousand-ton cold storage plant" and "there we must have warehouses to accommodate a million tons." The southern Atlantic ports of France and the railways of Central France and the free swing with plenty of room which we should require for our national effort, combined to locate our future theater of action between Verdun and the Swiss border, with the possibility of turning further northward from Central France as an axis in case of emergency. A people used to distances, we were set a problem in distances, after our troops and supplies were landed, farther than from London to the Somme battle front. Our lines of communication were to stretch clear across France to the hills and valleys of Lorraine, facing the Alsace-Lorraine of French desire.

Of all the cablegrams, ever increasing in volume from the days of meagerness in June, 1917, which have passed between "Agwar" and "Pershing, Amexforce," none of these better expressed the "make-it-brief" spirit than that of July 1st, in which the whole plan for our operations was outlined to the War Department, which might well have been stunned when it thought of all that had to be done to carry out the gigantic conception. These thousands of pages of cablegrams are a skeleton history of the expedition which recollection makes live with the tired muscles of soldiers in training, the heart of determination and the nerves quivering under strain held in leash by will and the spirit that conquers obstacles.

III

THE FIRST TROOPS ARRIVE

Building for an army of millions—The first convoy—The first American troops unlike any soldiers France had ever seen—Emotions of an American watching his own troops arriving in France—Surprising variety of Americans in the first contingent—General Pershing pays a visit to see his boys disembark—The First Division—Everything to do to transform green recruits into trained soldiers.

UNTIL troops arrived, the Staff would have the feeling of a head without a body; of a delegation rather than of an army. It awaited impatiently the coming of the division of regulars which was to follow General Pershing to France and with some curiosity as to its character.

Already the expansion of our regular regiments had left one trained man to stiffen and educate three recruits. Pride would have skimmed the best officers and men from several divisions in order to make a good showing abroad; and effect would have demanded that the large cities of France should have a glimpse of their veteran precision. We might have even rushed over two such divisions.

A different view, which prevailed in profit of British experience, had in mind how the flower of the British army went to the sacrifice at Mons at the expense of instructors for the future new British army. Our regular army, at the beginning of 1917,

was even smaller than the British in 1914, while our man-power was more than double that of the British Isles. As the Germans were then held on all fronts, no emergency, then in sight, required any such concentration of our best available troops of the kind which hurried Sir John French's army against the German advance through Belgium.

Thus, we could safeguard our own experts for school-mastering. Although they might long to be among the "first in France," we distributed them among the new divisions which were forming at home, in order to develop an army of that uniform quality necessary to a commander's confident handling in action. One or two or three crack divisions, selected at the expense of the others, would have been earlier in the trenches than a recruit division, but they would have a long wait before they were reinforced by other trained divisions. Indeed, we should have had a small *corps d'élite* in France and a large military mob at home.

Those bold young staff officers, working out their ambitious projects on paper in the Rue de Constantine, approved this decision. It fitted in with the splendid theory of building according to their professional ideals. They kept right on thinking in terms of millions as if from the force of habit. When they thought of effect it was military effect. The display of a crack division might thrill the Allies with the idea that we were impressing Germany, when the one authority to be impressed was the German Staff, which was watching to see whether or not America meant to make a real army of a size commensurate with her population and resources.

If anything ought to be kept a secret it should be the port of debarkation of the first American force to pass through the submarine zone, and the time of its arrival. The navy, which had the responsibility of safe conduct, was not lacking in self-consciousness in this respect.

Meanwhile, we had to make preparations for receiving the troops at some particular port. The more mysterious the French and the American officers delegated to the task appeared the more they confirmed the purpose of their presence. Everybody in that port knew that it was to have the honor of being host to the Americans; and people traveling up to Paris carried the news. I heard the port identified as a matter of gossip before I heard its identification in the Staff as a matter of strict confidence. The mayor of the port issued a proclamation of welcome. He wanted a public ceremony and speech making. French journalists and photographers went out on a dispatch boat to meet the first incoming transport. While we still had seven thousand men at sea, the bonds of censorship were broken and the initial landing of troops announced.

That port was far from the French front. Material of war came to its piers, but no soldiers. Prosperity and distinction beckoned to it from the first American transport that arrived, while our Admiral of the escort decided that he had a right to some relaxation and dinner on shore when the last was in. He had received a consignment of soldiers with orders to deliver them to France, and they were safely delivered. He had not thought that any accident might happen. But suppose there had!

The character of the ships which we had gathered as transports was significant enough of our lack of a merchant marine; a former German auxiliary cruiser and sea-going and coast-going vessels of a plodding speed. Above the gunwales of their gray sides was a crowded mass of khaki spotted with white faces, and all the parts of the superstructure were blotted and festooned by khaki, freed of the long nights in the close quarters of the hold when no lights might be shown on deck, now out in the sunlight of a June day having their first glimpse of France, which was having its first glimpse of an American army. Nothing that these soldiers saw was like what they had left—boats, piers, houses, streets, people—and they were like no soldiers who had ever come to France before. Their talk had the rattling twang of the bleachers before the ball game begins, unmistakable wherever you hear it. Well, here they were. The "subs" had not got them. They wouldn't have to knock about deck in the dark or be packed in the hold any longer. The sea was all right; let the navy have it! But give them the land; they were soldiers! When did they get ashore? And what next? A different set of questions rose in the observer's mind. How many more thousands and hundreds of thousands would come? When and where would their services end?

Their landing resolved the landing of the Staff at Boulogne into a prologue in front of the curtain which now rose on the play. Town and quay fell into insignificance; the ships dissolved into the sky, leaving only the troops visible, supreme—the first of our fighting men in France. The wonder of Amer-

ica in France never exerted its spell more completely. To one whose emotions had lost their resiliency after watching the war for three years, here was something new. As he thought of all that the picture stood for to him, an American, the war was beginning afresh for him even as it was beginning in the minds of these men. As he tried to articulate the thrill of his emotions, something tightened his throat and left him silent with a million little needles running a riot of prickles through his veins. For these were his own soldiers, the soldiers of his own people, come from his land to hazard their courage in the greatest of wars.

When I saw an American battalion marching through the streets and discrimination laid its restraint on sentimental exhilaration in the recollection of the columns of British regulars, every man molded by long training, which had marched out of Boulogne in August, 1914, I almost wished that Staffs were less particular about all-round programmes and that we had sent over a crack division of regulars as an example of the kind of trained soldiers that we could produce.

"The babies!" said an old regular sergeant. "You can't blame them for their ignorance, and you can't tell them all they've got to learn without taking the heart out of them. You've got to nurse them along by degrees, animadverting righteously to those who take their education best that way at intervals."

They did know how to keep step and which is the business end of a rifle and that when you march in a column of fours this does not mean threes and

twos. Many were as they had come to the recruiting station plus a certain amount of drill at home, and all stiff-legged, pasty and somewhat unkempt. If the sardines in the can were alive and flopped about they would not look neat when the can was opened. You noticed all kinds of Americans in the ranks as they went by—Americans who hardly spoke English as well as college graduates, including the veteran regulars whose straight backs and square shoulders stood out in admonitory superiority to youths who had yet to develop a soldier's physique before they went into battle.

But they were troops, American troops, and in France! To no one had this fact a greater appeal than to General Pershing, who had come down from Paris as eager as a schoolboy to see them. Furthest removed of all officers from his men by the gradations of rank, the Commander-in-Chief, if he is a human leader and not a bureaucrat, is nearest them in thought. It is they who count. All organization exists to supply, equip, train and inspirit them.

A walk through the streets of a depot of great warehouses leaves emotion dead where it thrills at sight of a platoon moving up to the trenches, or the gunners of a battery at work. Who, if not their leader, his firm features and erect carriage as an example of the iron will and bearing he would have them achieve, could realize the training these men needed? But they were troops—troops—troops; their presence in France meant that he had the nucleus of an army. There was a glad light in his eyes and also a light which was a promise of the course he was to put them through before they were

to go into the trenches, which was for the sake of the United States and of their own mothers who would not want them heedlessly sacrificed in their callow unpreparedness. In numbers they were only half a full division, with their total of about thirteen thousand men, including a regiment of Marines, who, being used to ship life and having a larger percentage of veterans, showed the results in their appearance.

This First Division was to have the handicap as well as the honor of being first. It was to be the object of the most experiments in training. From its experience were learned the lessons by which later arrivals profited. It came first out of democracy's individualism to the untried business of ship's discipline through the submarine zone; to the first censorship and all other kinds of regulations and to the first arrangements for landing and camping. Three-fourths of the officers were reserve, set over recruits sent to the scene of expert warfare. All this is not in criticism; only to indicate the nature of the travail which was to be theirs—the travail which wrought the First Division into finished soldiers, as we shall see.

At the camp outside the town where the men were to stretch their sea legs and brush up and acclimate themselves before moving to Lorraine, we had the first glimpse of that American soldier world which was to expand in France. There was an atmosphere of the border, no less than of home, in the queues of soldiers receiving their American rations, in the officers sitting down at their messes with the same food as the men; an expeditionary

effect which suggested that a landing in France of a force bringing the regulation army supplies was much the same as a landing at Vera Cruz, where three years previously I had seen our transports disembark troops and cargo—only the troops at Vera Cruz were all regulars, as you knew by the sight of them when they marched off the piers.

It is only fair to say, too, that the details for the dispatch of this expedition from home had not been rehearsed according to accepted Prussian Staff thoroughness. The Quartermaster's Department, under the strain of providing for the training camps and the influx of recruits, must have given that expedition such a blessing as this: "Joffre wanted troops in a hurry. Here they are. We've got them started, anyhow." Yes, we were to learn much about war organization in the next six months. The quartermaster who had to receive the expedition may have cursed the home quartermaster in his heart; I never heard him curse aloud. He had to do the best he could in everything, from organizing military police to unloading cargo.

The pioneers who had only to build themselves a house of hewn logs in the wilderness and bring in fresh meat with their rifles had a relatively simple task compared to his. He needed automobiles; he needed motor-trucks; he needed everything. Some of these were in the hold once they could be sorted out, for the different parts of a motor-truck might not be on one ship or two ships or three, and one essential part for the assembling might be altogether missing. Thus, there were other items than troops for General Pershing to consider in realizing his

problem—which did not interfere with the impressiveness of his meeting with Admiral Cleaves, as the army shook the navy's hand, in congratulations over the fact that, regardless of the troubles of the quartermaster, the first contingent was safe in France.

American mules went through the streets of that little port town, drawing army wagons piled high with officers' bedding rolls or sides of beef; motor-trucks that had been on the Mexican border ran past them on the way out to the camp; military police began keeping the crowds off the piers; the navy blue of sailors on shore mingled with khaki on the curbs or sat in front of the cafés; and under the covering barrages of gestures the vanguard of the expedition was making its first frontal attack on the French language.

IV

THEY GO TO LORRAINE

Touring versus fighting in France—Wonderful roads of France—Billets—Introducing soldiers into the family life of the French—Lorraine and the Lorrainers—Actions and reactions between French as hosts and Americans as guests—Those domestic manure heaps—Why our boys respect the French—French "kiddies."

In years to come the remark of the summer tourist, "I have been to France," will be an idle superficiality to the veterans of the A. E. F., who can say, "I have fought in France. I have marched the roads of France. I have ridden in box cars and slept in barns and dugouts and shell craters in France and lived in the homes of the people."

As an educational institution the A. E. F. had the advantage of disciplinary application over Chautauquas and university settlements. Nineteen out of twenty of our men would never have gone to France if the nation had not put them in uniforms and given them a free passage. When they left America they were thinking only of a great adventure overseas. Their ideas about France were generically concrete, perhaps, though utterly vague in detail. Before the war they thought of the French as a polite, effeminate people; since the war France had come to stand for courage and gameness.

An old traveler, who knew France well, might renew his youth by seeing France through the eyes of youth fresh from a new land. To our soldiers, I may repeat, there had been only one kind of railroad cars, only one kind of surface cars, only one kind of towns, villages and farms—the kind they knew at home. As the French landscape unrolled before their eyes they saw the well-tilled fields stretching between the villages, where the farmers lived, as if forming a national garden. Everything in France seemed to have been built to last for a long time. There were rarely any yards in front of the houses which were flush with the sidewalk; and then, to your surprise, you found cloistered gardens and lawns in the rear, hidden from the street. The people were polite and they smiled like the landscape.

It was the roads, the great main roads, which won our chief admiration. They bound the farms and the provinces together in still closer unity and they had a practical appeal which is so vital to armies moving on foot, on horseback or on wheels.

Our first motor-truck company to arrive in France had come straight from Mexico, where it had been in pursuit of Villa. After the trucks were assembled and the captain, a reserve officer, announced that they were ready to start the next morning, the sergeant, an old regular with a sandstone face, desert-wrinkled, who treated the new captain with a kindly patronage, felt it his duty to remonstrate.

"We've no frogs and chains," he said. These had been most essential in getting out of desert sloughs.

"Never mind. That will be all right!" the captain said.

"Yes, sir, but I warn you we've got no frogs and chains," the sergeant concluded.

He had given fair notice. Now let the captain find out for himself that handling army motor transport was a different business than running out from his office to the golf-course in his own machine.

Straight and smooth a Route Nationale beckoned the sergeant the next morning when he left the port. The veteran trucks sped on for half an hour with that road seeming to have no end. But the sergeant was still unconvinced. That Harvard college captain would yet see that frogs and chains were necessary. Two hours later, when the road was still the same taut ribbon stretching away into the distance, he capitulated to the captain's foresight with a few dry remarks.

"Well, I hand it to these people in the matter of roads. They sure got Mexico beat and got us beat. Down in Mexico I thought I was earning about five hundred dollars a month. I guess the prospect is now I'll be owing the Government something for the privilege of being in the army. In Mexico there don't seem nothing to do but make war and cussedness; but why should anybody want to go to war in a country like this? I guess the Kaiser wants some of this—that's what's the matter. Don't it kind of make your eyes sing after Mexico?—Everything so green and neat and all the little groves and trees like columns of soldiers guarding the roads. You can see that the people have been planting and reaping and sticking on the job generally for hun-

dreds of years and they have certainly got a big bank account laid up in old mother earth."

He was reminded by the captain how Cæsar had built roads for the passage of his legions and how Napoleon had built more roads for the passage of his, all of which became a legacy to future generations. Perhaps the necessity of the war which brought us to France may set our national thought to flowing on the straight broad way as the legacy of the A. E. F. to our future.

Though our men wanted to take the roads of France home with them, none wanted to take his "billets." There is the word which spells the most significant feature of army life in France to every officer and soldier. "Tenting on the old camp ground to-night!" will hardly do as a song for future veterans' associations. In our mind army life was still associated with tents until the barracks of our training camps at home were built and the men began writing from France about their billets.

The French were our hosts in more than a formal sense. We entered their homes as officially assigned guests. Reverse the situation and suppose that an army speaking another language came to help us against an invader, and when a company marched into a village every house became a hostelry to which a certain number of soldiers were assigned. It would create a flutter in our domestic circles, to say the least. In Europe to-day no man's house is his castle when the army wants it. The château becomes the general's headquarters and other officers get quarters in a descending scale of comfort in keeping with their rank. It is the thought that an

invader will arbitrarily exercise the same authority, ever present in the French mind, which reinforces patriotism with a sovereign self-interest in national defense.

"If you want a job that will tear your nerves to tatters be a billeting officer," said a weary colonel, after the First Division had arrived in its training area. The journey across France hardly recalled the luxury which private soldiers had enjoyed at home when they were sent to the Border in sleepers. Now they went in box cars marked "36 men or 8 horses"—just as the sons of the best families in France travel on their troop trains, singing the songs of France and exchanging the quips of trench jargon—and after their arrival they were assigned to billets in the village houses and barns. When an officer or a man says that he liked his billet in any particular village it means not only that he liked his quarters, but also his hosts and his neighbors.

Our First Division was to train in the land of Joan of Arc. The Lorrainers are a stiff-necked people, less volatile than the people of other parts of France, but polite as are all the French. While they fought stubbornly in this war and in others to hold their frontier they were standing between the Germans and the sun-blessed southern France, which profits by their wall of heroism as England profits by her Channel. In August, 1914, the invaders swept as far as Charmes as the Bavarians aimed for the great gap of Mirecourt; and the people on the other side of Mirecourt heard the battle's roar recede with a feeling of thanksgiving whose devoutness central or southern France could only faintly appreciate.

When you know Lorraine it seems fitting that it should have given Joan of Arc to France. To-day you may still see such peasant girls as she was, straight as young birch trees with eyes wide apart and sensitive mouths and firm chins. The villages have changed little since she tended her flocks and the character of the people is much the same as when she went forth from shepherding her flocks to lead an army. From high ground clusters of red roofs break into view on the rich river bottoms and in valleys mottled with woodlands and pastures, but proximity removes some of the charm and picturesqueness as you enter narrow streets where manure is piled in front of the house door. Local customs in this respect were something of a shock to the sons of progressive American farmers.

Say that early in July you were in an automobile that had left a Route Nationale for a winding road that played hide and seek with a winding stream. A village slipped by and you saw men in campaign hats and khaki shirts and still more and more of them in the villages for the next sixteen miles. This was the American training area, and the inhabitants who had never seen even tourist Americans to speak to them might marvel at the dispensation of fortune which had made them the hosts of the American army. It was a surprise to some of them that we had not red skins. Our names were puzzling. People to whom a German is a German and a Frenchman is a Frenchman, born on opposite sides of a frontier and predestined to war, might wonder how Private Schmittberger U. S. A., could fight on the French side.

Our theory of a melting-pot, amalgamating all races into a nation which was ready to shed its blood for the cause which was France's, required elucidation to a peasant of Lorraine steeped in racial antipathy. Even educated Frenchmen were apprehensive lest our troops include German sympathizers. The convincing answer kept to practical grounds. Didn't Private Schmittberger look as American as Private Smith or De la Croix? Weren't there German names in France, particularly in Lorraine?

The best time to make the run through our area was in the late afternoon when the companies were mustered for evening roll call, supple shoulders showing under soft khaki shirts and features with dry skin sharply outlined, inherently, appealingly American in the golden light of the evening sun. Later, you saw them in groups about the doorways of the old houses in the dusk, the novelty of their presence still dominating everything. They had made that valley theirs by the very character of their uniforms which identified any man in silhouette to the eye at a distance.

Products of a different language and different customs, introduced into strange surroundings and other people's homes, we must play a worthy part as guests. General Orders No. 7, issued on July 3rd, had in mind the irritations and difficulties that might arise from the peculiar situation. It appealed to the self-respect of the thoughtful " in the good name of the United States," with a reminder for the thoughtless that those who offended would be brought to trial under the 89th Article of War. The spirit of Lee's order to his army upon the in-

vasion of Pennsylvania shone through this order. It was expressive of our idea that a man's house is a castle; of the very principle for which we were fighting against militarism.

"The good name of the United States and maintenance of cordial relations require perfect deportment of each member of this command," the order read in part. "It is of the gravest importance that the soldiers of the American army shall at all times treat the people of France, especially the women, with the greatest courtesy and consideration. The valiant deeds of the French armies and those of her Allies, by which they have together successfully maintained their common cause for three years, and the sacrifice of the civil population of France in the support of their armies, command our profound respect. This can best be expressed on the part of our forces by uniform courtesy to all the French people and by faithful observance of their laws and customs.

"Company and Detachment commanders will inform themselves and advise their men as to local police regulations and will enforce strict observance thereof.

"The intense cultivation of the soil in France and the conditions caused by the war make it necessary that extreme care be taken to do no damage to private property. The entired French manhood capable of bearing arms is in the field fighting the enemy. Only old men, women and children remain to cultivate the soil. It should, therefore, be a point of honor with each member of the American army to avoid doing the least damage to any property in

France. Such damage is much more reprehensible here than in our own country."

In contravention of army sanitary regulations about the removal of such nuisances, did this warning apply to the manure pile whose odors penetrated into the haymow where Privates Schmittberger and Smith had their home? Their grandfathers would not have minded. Only in the present generation has sanitation become a cult with us, which makes our nostrils delicately sensitive and requires sleeping porches lest we breathe anything but fresh air. Our men had been punched or vaccinated for every known disease for which there is an injective antidote. They were bred into the great bath-tub-filter-and-sanitary-plumbing era, no less than every Frenchman is bred into his antipathy to the German. I recollect one day meeting a young officer, obviously brought up in cotton wool, who had just bought a siphon of seltzer in a French village.

"I don't dare drink this local water," he said, "so I bought this bottle. Do you think it is all right?"

"Didn't you have your typhoid and paratyphoid shots?" I asked, a teasing spirit possessing me when I saw what a nice chubby young man he was.

"Yes, sir, but you never know."

"Aren't you wearing your metal identification tag?" I asked.

"Yes, sir, but——"

"Well, that means you wouldn't be among the unknown when the casualty list goes home," I said. "That bottle is full of germs. It's been in the shop accumulating germs for years waiting for you."

"Are you joking with me?" he asked. "This is a serious matter."

He was expressive of an extreme that amused an old civilization with its meticulosity. I was happy to tell him that our bacteriological experts had examined the local water supply and found it pure. A year later the young man had lost some weight from hard training, which was good for him, but he was drinking the water he found in the carafes on restaurant tables—which is not saying that the infinite care taken about the health of our army is not worth while. Rather, it confirms the triumphant fact that when we landed we brought all the fine traditions of our medical corps in the Philippines and the Caribbean to France, and all the directions of loving parents, too.

I gasped when I saw one of our army wagons removing a manure pile.

"Do you think you can get away with that kind of thing in France?" I asked.

"As fast as we can. One more load will finish this lot."

They were dumping it outside the town, without regard to whether it was on the owner's premises or not, I fear. The resulting disturbance of international relations required that French *liaison* officers exert to the fullest their diplomatic influence. We were ready to pay for the damage done and were Americans, to whom much was forgiven. Curiosity as to our character and doings exerted a lenient influence. If we wanted to sweep the streets and pick up every little bit of paper and remove every bit of rubbish in sight, why, the inhabitants respected

our army and customs as we were supposed to respect theirs—respected them more, perhaps, than would many an American community where the painstaking hand of sanitary military discipline has not descended.

The remainder of the general order about the absence of able-bodied men referred to a fact which was most appealing to our soldiers; a fact brought home to them in every village. France was not expecting others to fight for her without fighting herself. Besides, we had a new lesson in industry—we who had thought of ourselves as an industrious people. When reveille sounded the family was already awake and young boys and every old man and woman who could hobble starting out for work in the fields. We saw afresh and vividly, as I have said, the things which were old to those who had been in Europe since the start of the war; how no description could make you realize the tremendous conflict and the penetration of its influence into every heart, every house, every blade of grass; how sacrifice was borne stoically and cheerfully.

Soldiers, who seem to acquire the simplicity of children, are fond of children; innocence takes the mind away from the monotony of drill and the moil of the trenches. The men prefer the admiration of children to the cheers of a crowd for their heroism, and "kid talk" to recounting exploits to adult admirers. The spell which the children of France exerted over every soldier from the first was not alone due to the sympathy which their smiles, or the smiles of their mothers for the future's sake when the husband was dead on the field of honor, aroused

on the background of war. We found that whether the children came from château or from alleys, they had as a birthright that indescribable thing most difficult of acquirement and most truly French—charm. Their parents had thrift, too. It was from children that the soldiers largely learned their French, though not in the manner of a powerfully built corporal I have in mind seated in a doorway, knotting his brows over his primer which made French easy in a few lessons. He drew up on his lap, much as a big dog would lift a puppy, a little girl who had been sitting at his feet, regarding him as she would an inhabitant from another world.

"Say, kid, is this right?" he asked, as he read off an exercise according to his own phonetic pronunciation.

"*Oui! Oui!*" said the child, who thought that he was still speaking English; and thus they continued the lesson happily together.

V

HARD TRAINING

The sentry at Headquarters—A true soldier of France—A headquarters at school—Leavenworth and the *chasseurs alpins*—Drill, drill, and more drill—Baseball and bomb throwing not identical—French teachers and American scholars—Fundamentals and fine points of training—Our artillery begins to learn.

If we wished to hide our division in France and make its training a matter of strict family secrecy we could not have chosen a better retreat than the folds of the Lorraine landscape. The only histrionic effect about the division headquarters, which was located in a house up a side street of the largest of the villages in our area, was the *chasseur alpin* who stood sentry at its entrance. He was a particularly fine specimen of that famous corps of mountain fighters, the Blue Devils. His rakish blue Tam O'Shanter cap set off a certain self-consciousness of the honor which was his as the result of his heroic exploits. Dust on the dustiest days seemed never to cling to his blouse; he looked always fresh, cool and on the *qui vive*.

Napoleon and the great Condé and d'Artagnan would have approved of him as having the true *élan* of a French warrior. Meissonier and Detaille would not have required any further posing before

painting him. The more times he had to present arms the better it seemed to please him; and he seemed always to put into the formality something of the spirit of a Coquelin in his first pass in a stage duel. Officers who answered his salute thought that with a million such they might conquer the world; American soldiers who had not yet looked over a trench parapet saw in him the miraculous survivor of three years' fighting. He was truly a mighty man; and by the criterion of his presence one might expect to find inside headquarters the clicking together of heels and the summary commands of the hour of battle.

Turn to the right as you entered headquarters, and, at the little table next the door, sat the adjutant. He was a kind and patient man, or he would never have attempted to answer half the questions asked him. Next to him at another small table was one of the division commander's aides, who was so good-natured in those trying days that he was later put in charge of transportation, with malice prepense, I think, to see if an unacclimatized mule train would not make him lose his temper. It did, occasionally. A French interpreter and the one priceless field clerk and his typewriter completed the personnel in this room. In the adjoining one, with the door always open, sat Major General William L. Sibert, then commanding the division, and, in the corner, his Chief of Staff.

Upstairs were junior officers up to their ears in French documents on tactics and drill, which, with the help of a French interpreter and a French officer, they were turning into English. No maps of

trenches on the walls! No reports of actions from the front! It was like no other division headquarters in France.

The dreamers at General Headquarters might make their project for an ultimate one or two or three million men, but here rested the concrete responsibility of speedily getting a few thousand men ready for the trenches.

Leavenworth and the French Chasseurs cooperated in the task. Who had ever heard of our army school of the Line and Staff College at Leavenworth before we entered the war, let alone considered what influence it might have on the destinies of the world? Even the average citizen of adjacent Kansas City had little idea of what was going on in that army post. In the midst of the wheat fields of Kansas, officers of mature years became students again, striving by ten or twelve hours' application a day to be graduated with honors. If we had no armies to maneuver in fact, they would maneuver imaginary armies. They worked over the details of organization and combat; prepared problems for solution; moved their units in attack and retreat; besieged fortresses and sent out flying expeditions against guerillas—all in the fascination of the "war game" to zealous professional minds.

What algebra, trigonometry and calculus are to the engineers, what the Beaux Arts is to the architect, that course was to them. It developed powers of application; opened the doors of understanding to the problems of real war; engendered appreciation of the infinitely complicated business of the feeding

and movement of great masses of men as a homogeneous force.

The first training orders of the First Division set the command's working hours as eight with Sunday and Saturday afternoon free. "All possible means," it said, "will be employed with the utmost vigor to improve the appearance, military bearing and spirit of the officers and soldiers of this command." Physical drill, close order drill and marches of not more than two hours a day were the initial prescription for stiffening backs with layers of muscle and establishing the sense of obedience and coordination. And then the salute. That seems a kind of formality which has little to do with killing the enemy, but it is the a b c of discipline. Veterans may be careless about it and still be efficient, perhaps, though they set a bad example and open the way to their own deterioration. Novices, at least, may not neglect this essential of inculcating that instinctive subordination which is requisite if orders are to be obeyed.

The First Division had been no further advanced in the fundamentals of training than the other regular divisions at home, which had the same proportion of recruits. It had lost time in transit, with military deportment and physical condition suffering on the long voyage; but now it was actually in France, actually in the theater of war, where unconsciously it would absorb the lessons of war. The imposition of discipline was easy in an isolated community dissociated from any except military influence.

Our officers could learn first hand what part of their old teachings they must discard, and they were

often to be puzzled by the difference of opinion of the experts on the spot. What was approved one month might not be the next. The success of some change of tactics at the front meant a new fashion in training; for in nothing is the criterion of success so mandatory as in war. Where, at home, instruction was under the advice of a few Allied officers in each camp, men in France had the advantage, in place of class-room recital and lectures, of private tutoring by a force of *chasseurs alpins* who were billeted in the villages of a road that ran parallel to ours.

Thus settled in their summer homes the grind began. As one of our soldiers said, if he had known that four months of such drudgery was coming, he would have left his part in making the world safe for democracy to Kerensky. The training section of the General Staff did not think there was any road to efficiency but drill and more drill. Notice was served that we were through with the idea that a million men in shirt sleeves could spring to arms and overwhelm any power that dared to threaten us.

Every morning, soon after dawn, instructors and pupils marched out from their billeting areas to the training grounds, where the picture in the early days suggested the first preparations for some great pageant in the instruction of small groups as a prelude to general rehearsals. French talent for pantomime made up for the want of a common tongue. After the chasseurs had given an exhibition of how a thing was done, they watched us try to imitate their proficiency and corrected our mistakes. Blue cap

and campaign hat nodded together over a lesson in the use of the automatic rifle or the machine gun.

We were tenderfeet in a strange land and we knew it. The chasseurs knew it, too. They got a subtle enjoyment out of the privileges of teaching us fundamentals which will furnish them with as interesting yarns as their battles for their grandchildren in days to come. We admired them because they knew their business—which is the highest of compliments to our practical American minds.

If we did not find as much fun in the curriculum as they, that was only the misfortune of the learner at any game. Our regret was that they had everything to show us and we had nothing to show them in return. We thought that the tables would be turned by our baseball training when it came to throwing hand grenades; and they would have been if a baseball and a hand grenade were of the same weight. As they are not, strained arms soon convinced us that the overhand bowling throw was the best; and you must learn that, too, according to an exact system, as you had to learn everything else from the standardized experience of trench warfare.

Pantomime had its limitations even in the demonstration of physical action. You not only want the golf teacher to show you how to make the stroke, but to tell you the theory of it and the reason for it. The language difficulty only increased French politeness, whether the instructor spoke English himself or acted through an interpreter. Sometimes we were praised as the most wonderful of students, when our regular officers had an idea that progress was partly due to the fact that they had been pretty

well grounded in the military rudiments before they came to France. What they wanted was a straight-out-from-the-shoulder criticism such as they were accustomed to make among themselves.

"Is what the French say just kidding Lafayette stuff or are we really prodigies?" exclaimed an officer, after he had been the recipient of a panegyric through an interpreter; for compared to the way the chasseurs carried out the movement it looked to him as if his men belonged to the bush league.

"Come on, now, put more pep into it!" American voices rang out. "That's better."

Baseball might not help us to throw hand grenades, but the baseball spirit was there. Pride and ambition urged on our efforts. When noon came sharp appetites welcomed luncheon and tired muscles welcomed rest as the men dropped to earth. Usually we formed groups by ourselves and the French by themselves. Masters and pupils had had enough language effort in school hours without continuing it in periods of relaxation. To labor in French when you are dog tired is a little more than you or your auditor can bear.

There was not much drill in the afternoon. Work must halt when staleness and weariness reached a point where the spur of will defeated its own purpose. There was the homeward march to make and fatigue details to be performed in the villages. After supper, in the cool of the evening, were more French lessons from the women and children in the doorways; and then, up the ladder into the barn loft, to be turned out again at dawn to march to another day of school.

As thoroughly as doctors study their patients the men were studied in order to gain the maximum of results; and soldier psychology played a part. Many of the men had the idea that the war would be over before they would ever get into the trenches; that all this drilling would be as futile as carrying water from a creek to the top of a hill and allowing it to flow back into the creek. The British New Army battalions were possessed with the same illusion in the fall of 1914 and also many of the recruits in our Civil War. Homesickness, too, appeared—with many circumstances to develop it.

Had Washington forgotten us? Were we only a sentimental, a diplomatic army? Officers found it hard to think otherwise, considering the things ordered which did not arrive. Their troubles were not confined to their work with the men and to "paper work" half the night. Some were associated with the quartermaster in the schoolhouse in headquarters town. It might be a gratifying thing for him to consider the resources of the United States, but it did not solve his problems of transport. A small barrack building had been erected as his depot over by the railroad station—the Nestor of all the depots. He was glad to issue or to sell anything he had to anybody in uniform and he would send telegrams down the line to hurry up consignments and try to do anything else you wanted him to do, except the impossible. He was perfectly willing to try that again, but by the criterion of past experience could hold out no promises of satisfactory results.

When the men ran short of smoking tobacco for

a while, French cigarettes did not take the place of the "makings." The news that a consignment of baseball equipment had gone down at sea was a tragedy; and they could not buy the little things they liked, toilet soap, gum, candy. Letters were long in coming from home—that hurt most. When a letter was received, well it brought up visions of the soda water fountain in the corner drug store, and the local league scores, the family and kids and what your friends were doing. This great adventure stuff was all right, but it did not make you feel any less like a stranded orphan child far away in Lorraine. However, play the game and don't fail to salute your superior officer. He salutes his superior who salutes Pershing, who salutes the President whom you elected to give you orders to salute in time of war.

There was some consolation that as the training advanced it became more interesting and varied. From the first reader we went to the second; from arithmetic to algebra; from exercises to problems and maneuvers. In fact we had relief from practice strokes and were allowed to play around the course. When the French advanced under a barrage to the attack to show us how an attack was to be made and we repeated the maneuver with shells sweeping over our heads—this was something like. But it did not mean that we were going into the trenches yet. We were back at practicing strokes again in the different schools of specialism.

Our officers visited the French front to see in practice what they were learning in theory. They heard lectures and still more lectures. The training

was having its effect on them no less than on the men. Surplus adipose had evaporated under rigorous exercise. Figures were more perpendicularly formal when they saluted and bodies had more litheness in rushing a machine gun up a trench. Young reserve officers became sure of themselves. What a transformation when the command appeared in steel helmets in place of campaign hats! It led friends when they met to say: "Introduce me to the stranger!" Anybody who accepted the helmets as a sure sign that now we were really going to see action was disillusioned upon learning that rank and file must become accustomed to wearing them, as well as to the use of gas masks.

Meanwhile, the division's brigade of artillery arrived and was going through its paces on a French artillery training ground under Major General Peyton C. March. Its percentage of recruits was as high as that of the infantry regiments; for we had scattered our regular artillerymen as schoolmasters as broadcast as our infantrymen. These recruits were supplied with the French 75mm. field gun and the French 155, while the example of proficiency to be achieved in artillery was the most impressive, in view of the traditions of French gunnery from Napoleon's time, and its development in this war. A French battery in action is an expression of all the finesse of French artillery spirit and character. The veteran gunners do not bother to swagger. They take it for granted that they are masters of their art. Their discipline is that of the coördination of perfect appreciation of each man of his part and of the professional confidence of the expert.

"We breed gunners in France," said a French officer.

All the world knows by this time the system of modern artillery fire and how it symbolizes the science and the painstaking detail of modern war. The gunners, never seeing their target, are in the position of the engineers in the bowels of a cruiser answering the captain's call from the bridge. Our men might go through the prescribed drill quite to their own satisfaction only to be shocked by the poor results of their shooting. They would have been more shocked if they could have seen a motion picture of their own movements compared to those of French veterans. We might know the theory, but the stroke we could achieve only by practice which would make the gun become a living thing to us as it was to the French, who, on the fields of the Marne and Lorraine, had saved France with their artillery genius. We must have the gun's nerves of steel and our human nerves must flow into its steel. The hand that swung the breechblock must be welded to it by an electric touch of understanding.

A gunner's reasons for training hard are as distinct as a blood-red spot on a white bandage. A slip on his part is as fatal as that of a surgeon's knife. His responsibility there in the gun pit is accuracy—the accuracy of every unit of a chorus of batteries in laying a swath of protection for advancing infantry, or in withering the enemy's advance with their blasts. Inaccuracy simply means that you are killing your own comrades instead of the enemy.

The responsibility of those who give orders from

the other end of the telephone, even heavier, is that of science and judgment which are no less wrought of experience as the final instructor. Consider the difference between gunnery in August, 1914, and August, 1917, though the French field gun had not changed, and you span the developments in navigation between Columbus' day and the present. Shell bursts are moved here and there as you move pins on a map. You turn on one battery or a hundred batteries, disposing their shots according to the pattern required by the situation. It is science with the fascination of magic; but science subject to human error, in a combination of the intricacies of observation and calculation which leaves nothing atmospheric, nothing terrestrial, nothing that eye can see or brain can conceive out of account. Sound ranging, whereby you plot the position of an enemy's gun through locating the sound of its blast, was nursed through the infancy of experiments, until it became a most important branch of artillery science.

On the other side of No Man's Land the other fellow conceals his guns, and on your side yours are set like chessmen on the board under your hand playing against moves behind his screen, where thousands of monsters in their lairs may have cunningly scattered their shots in registering on their chosen targets before, at the given moment, all turn loose their thunders in the preparation for an attack. If you could know where each of his guns are located, your guns could silence his fire gun for gun.

This, of course, is only repeating what has been often told before, with the conscious aim of con-

veying the nature of the undertaking in making artillery beginners, officers and men, with their groundwork of theory sufficiently trained practitioners to be allowed at the front. It is one thing to hit the target, another to make an accurate barrage, and both are a long way from acquiring all the "business" which written texts or word of mouth cannot explain; a very long way from sure judgment in the test of battle, reënforced by the systematic control of observation and transmission of information, which knows where to place the barrage and when to lift it, what calibers for that purpose and what for this, and with all dependent upon that promptness and accuracy at any hour, day or night, from the batteries which must fit action nicely with plan when delay may reckon its costs in lives.

Thus, the gunners in their camp learned their first lessons and the infantry in their camps learned theirs, waiting on the day when the guns should go into position behind the infantry in face of the enemy to form a unit of action. Both branches were impatient; and their impatience was valuable in so far as it was transformed into application which would hasten the fruition of their desire. It was for these pioneers to set the traditions of thoroughness, when thoroughness is less our national characteristic than resource, quickness and initiative, some critics say. If so, this was the more reason for the restraint of the judges in training as they waited for the temper of the human steel to set.

VI

A BLUE PRINT ERA

Laying plans for the construction of a giant—France a sheet of white paper whereon we had to write our undertaking—Necessary to bring our own war materials—Early regiments of American railway employees and lumber men—Clubbing together with France and England to obtain material in the quickest time—Negro roustabouts to the rescue—American railroad officials rushed to France to direct our transportation—Big plans and slow fulfillment—Beginning to carry through an enterprise greater than building the Panama Canal.

If we are to have a complete picture of what America was doing in France at this time we must consider other stages of preparation which ran current with the early stages of training of the troops. General Pershing's headquarters had to remain in Paris through July and August in order to be at a central point for administration; or, rather, for the establishing and developing of something to administer. With its texts set, the First Division might proceed with its lessons. The General had to prepare for the other divisions which were to come.

Even the skeleton of the project which we had planned existed as yet only as a blue print. We must make the bones of this giant before we could articulate them and attach flesh and mucles and provide a brain and a circulatory system. He must have nerves enough but not too many, and his legs must

not be too long for his body or his body too large for his heart. His form and character, his morals and *morale,* his efficiency and spirit required that scientific building should follow scientific plans, with such supplies of labor and material as were available. Secretary Baker had expressed our situation in a phrase when he said that France was a sheet of white paper whereon we had to write our undertaking.

Exclusive of Krupps and her other plants which she had developed for this war, Germany, as a manufacturing country in the all-round sense, was better adapted for meeting war requirements than Britain or France. Russia was almost entirely, and Serbia and Rumania entirely, agricultural. Italy had neither coal nor iron. The black country of France passed into German hands early in the war. Depending upon the possession of the sea routes of the world as a guarantee of munitions which should overwhelm the besieged Central Powers, the Allies were losing ships faster than they were being built.

Our own resources had already been stretched in filling the war orders that had lifted us out of an era of hard times into an era of plethoric trade balances and banking reserves. When we entered the war, cargoes were piled upon our piers awaiting transport across the Atlantic. Men labored in the fields of Kansas to produce grain and in our plants and factories to produce material which passed into the shark's maw of the U-boats. Destruction was everywhere overwhelming construction.

For three years all the able-bodied young men of France had been non-productive. Available labor had been diverted from peace to war requirements.

Crops were sown and reaped, but weeds crept into the fields for lack of proper husbandry. Upkeep was everywhere neglected, except under the direction of military necessity; and French no less than German railways had deteriorated both in rolling stock and roadbeds.

Our untrained army could not expect material from the French which they needed for their own trained army. We who were in France did not need to wait on the Russian collapse or the Italian defeat on the Isonzo for an appreciation of the nature of a situation which characterized Germany's peace proposals as a subterfuge to lull the Allies into a false conviction of her weakness, while she worked out her plans. The proposed pooling of Allied resources, a favorite subject of inter-allied conference and journalistic suggestion, now had a practical application in certain adjustments, through French and American military authorities, whereby we supplied France with what we could spare and she supplied us with what she could spare.

We had skilled labor at home, untrained in war, which could release her skilled labor trained in war to go to the front. Indeed, Joffre's first call had been for railway engineers. The pioneer regiment dispatched in haste, illy equipped, was so useful that word was sent home for the organization of more of these regiments, which, as fast as they arrived, were distributed about France. They adapted themselves to the strange business of running trains according to the French railroad system, or, set to the hard labor which is the initiation of immigrants into our "melting-pot," they plied pick and shovel on con-

struction work, their occupation glorified by the fact that they were helping to make war in France.

Tonnage for the shipment of lumber for our barracks and other structures could be saved if we transferred lumbermen from our primitive forests of the Northwest to the cultivated forests of France. For lighter unskilled work France could offer us invalided soldiers, men too old for the trenches, or German prisoners, who might have to be taken from the fields, leaving a heavier burden on the old men and women and children, or from the repair of the roads, which must be kept in condition for army transport by the continued attention of those blue-coated territorials who stand to one side from their labor as the cars pass.

If we sent locomotives and rolling stock to France, she could lease us any buildings not in use to house our personnel. In return for our meat and grain we could buy vegetables from her gardens; and, incidentally, that French hen, the mother of the omelet of France, had survived the ravages of automobiles in sufficient numbers to keep up an amazing supply of fresh eggs. She seemed to realize her duty to her country and by her devotion to it in winter months defied cold storage monopolies, though not that continual rise in prices which every shopkeeper excused by saying, " It is the war."

France could make planes for our aviators in training until the Liberty Plane arrived. In the same way we secured the equipment of our artillery until we should produce guns of the French models which were to take the place of our own. The steel billets which France had from us were forged into

75's and 155's by French arsenals which had been developed to abundant capacity. British plants, already in operation, could supply us with steel helmets and with gas masks until we were making our own models in sufficient quantity. There might be no question of the superiority of our Browning machine gun, but until it was produced in numbers we must depend on French machine guns and automatic rifles. Every horse for our guns and transport which we could buy in France meant additional space on board ship for transporting troops. Thus, by clubbing together, the Allies fitted out our forces with such things as we lacked. It was a patchwork kind of business which had to consider "priority" from many angles of influence and administration.

When every day's delay in unloading ships meant waste in tonnage by increasing the time of the "turn-around"—that besetting phrase of the tonnage experts—there was a demand for something sturdier than Frenchmen, who were not able-bodied enough to fight for the business of putting cargo on shore and handling it after it was on shore. The powers of darkness came to the rescue when word of the situation was carried to the banks of the Mississippi. There was nothing ænemic about the cohorts from the levees, the first men from national draft, I believe, to arrive in France.

Certainly, the process of selection in this instance was a very simple one in the classification of personnel. No travelers were ever more genuinely homesick; but "that there" draft had them in its grip, and, needless to say, as an institution was not

the object of any sentimental enthusiasm on their part. In common with other men assigned, hundreds of miles in the rear, to the same kind of work they did at home, they realized, to the disgust of their martial inclinations, that fighting is not all there is to making war. When a colored regiment distinguished itself, this was some satisfaction to their racial pride and awakened their hope that they might yet have a chance to meet the Germans.

More and more of our outposts were scattered over France. And they were only outposts; tiny dots on that "sheet of white paper" connected up by the flights of officers in automobiles with portfolios full of plans and additional blue prints. The wild stories of our building a railroad across France at the rate of ten miles a day and depots arising as by magic were the interpretation of our dreams by public imagination, which drew its inspiration from the diabolical energy of the scouts and the projectors who were trying to make bricks without straw and even without clay. They did not wait on negotiations through headquarters, but acted on their own initiative in seeking material from the French. A reply to an inquiry that there was no material was not final to the inquirer. He took his interpreter and went in search of the thing he wanted. When he found it and sought the owner, he might learn that it was already promised or needed for French purposes; or, if for sale, that it was second hand or third hand or ready for the junk pile, while the price demanded was in keeping with the limitations of supply.

Americans used to calling up a lumber yard, a machine shop, or an employment agency on the telephone and having an order filled, were trying to avoid nervous prostration as they became familiarized with the meaning of war conditions. Meanwhile, they wanted to report progress to headquarters which was considerate unless the subject was supplies for the troops in training, which ever had absolute priority.

Regular officers with a few from the reserve corps, who had been sponsors of the blue prints and the placing of the outposts, were reënforced by every steamer from the States with personnel which in civil life had built bridges, tunnels, piers and railways and organized labor. One of the directors of a great railroad system became our railroad general, bringing with him subordinates commissioned on a day's notice, to whom their uniforms were still an harassing envelope strapped on their persons by a Sam Browne belt. They reached involuntarily for their waistcoat pockets before it occurred to them to look at their wrist watches to see what was the time of day.

If they were middle-aged men and settled in their habits, French customs in the matter of light breakfasts and serving the meat and vegetables in separate courses were an additional annoyance. One reserve Major, who had been used to putting on his shoes before his trousers, was triumphant one morning over the fact that he was at last accustomed to breeches, as he had remembered to put them on before his shoes.

All arrived with the speed of a limited express,

only to have the brakes put on by the shipping situation, which stood in the way of immediately receiving from home a requisition for "a thousand miles of telephone wire, water supply pumps, tanks, standpipes, shop facilities, including all appliances for repairing and rebuilding locomotives and cars; track and bridge tools for maintenance purposes, wrecking outfits, pile drivers, track-laying machinery, oxy-acetylene plants, concrete-mixing plants, two-ton and five-ton locomotive cranes, portable electric light plants" and a few other things which would make an engineering force feel comfortable where they had such a job as the blue prints called for to perform on short notice. Such demands went over the cable along with a call for reserve officers for managing laundries, looking after repair shops for boots and shoes, or ten thousand lariat straps and ten thousand picket pins, thus keeping the War Department fully occupied with troubles of its own.

Having come to France to "make good" as chosen men of their calling, when they considered their previous standards of accomplishment these experts might have thrown up their hands in dismay; but that was un-American. They went to work and talked like optimists to keep themselves cheerful, or foregathered around the blue prints and discussed whether or not we had secured sufficient space for the spur tracks required back of the piers we were to build as soon as we had pile drivers and piles, if the "project" were expanded to three million men. One railroad man said that you did not have to go "over the top" in order to realize the truth of Sherman's saying about war. He had enough

idea of it in trying to assemble a locomotive with the help of four German prisoners, a French interpreter and a second lieutenant who was said to be a good Latin scholar but had not yet become "classified personnel."

Anyone who went along the lines of communication in August required a full supply of the American brand of Mulberry Sellers faith. When he sought the future main depot of supplies and a quartermaster with two officer assistants and one clerk in an office referred the inquirer to such material as he would find in the little building across from the railway station as all there was to show at present, he understood how the group of engineers in their tents who were to provide acres of storage warehouses, might not feel envious of the progress of other portions of the project.

A vast field and a few tents were the start of the great aviation school which was to become a small city of hangars and barracks. We had then finished our first piece of railroad construction in France, a stretch of seven miles from a French railhead which was to bring material for building the school. A hundred miles away in the outskirts of a city we had set up our first field bakery, which was baking for our troops the only white bread in France. It was not too good for them. Nothing is.

The regular officer in charge rued the day when he had taken a course in baking to increase his all-around efficiency as an officer, for it destined him to be chief baker in France as long as his bread was good. His flour came from the distant ports where steamers waited their turn to unload for want of pier space; and heterogeneous piles of cargo had to

be sorted with a view to forwarding the things for which the demand seemed the most vital.

Each isolated part, hardly recognizable as having any connection with the other parts in the blue print scheme, was making some sort of a start, but halting to yield to the demands of others. The war was not one of blood and death, but of men working with naked hands in want of tools, crying for material to sources of supply three thousand miles away. Where a letter of requisition from British headquarters reached the War Office by mail the same day or the day after it was written, we must count on ten days to three weeks' postal transit or upon the cable, which garbled technical details. Where in England, France and Germany industries are concentrated in small national areas and pressing orders from the front can be filled promptly, a pressing order from us might have to be sent from Chicago or Pittsburg to wait upon a pier for the next steamer, when, in the zealous haste, which makes for disorganization, to get that steamer started the article might be overlooked and left behind. But the time was summer. Life in France was new to us as a compensation. Worse was yet to come with winter. We must be cheerful and keep on working. The first month's experience had taught even those of us without imagination that the project for supplying the army, let alone preparing it for battle, was an enterprise surpassing that of the Panama Canal in magnitude and difficulty. How we ever accomplished it is a wonder that can be explained only by our energy, our spirit and our team play under a driving and understanding leadership, inspired by the cause.

VII

MANY PROBLEMS

Problem of the Sam Browne belt—Problem of our uniform—Problems as to driving our automobiles, regulations for civilian visitors, passports, etc.—The ambulance drivers—Final disposition of the young Americans who had served France in her ambulance corps—Working to make our army a clean army—Outlining the field for the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A., the Salvation Army and the K. of C.

THERE must be consideration in this formative period not only for the big things, but for the seemingly little things which would have far-reaching influence in precedents and customs established and policies initiated. It is easy to write and order and easier to revoke it than to change the habit of conduct which its provisions have inculcated in minds sensitive to first impressions in the early days of an organization. When our officers appeared in the Sam Browne belt it meant that all officers coming to Europe would have to wear it, which represented, once we had forty or fifty thousand officers in France, the expenditure of a great deal of leather when leather was scarce.

Sam Browne's name was taken in vain with all the ardor of a strict economist by those who were responsible for the decision in favor of the belt. I think that the British army officer who was the originator of the belt, with its two shoulder straps

and supports for sword, canteen, glasses, revolver and other equipment in order to keep all from bouncing against the soft region below the ribs on long horseback rides in colonial campaigns would have been astounded himself that his invention, in a war in which officers did not carry swords, should be adopted by the French army as well as by the British as a substitute for the sword in indicating to soldiers the possession of the commissioned officer's rank. It was regulation with our allies; and we made it regulation.

Was our uniform suitable for a European campaign? A board considered the subject. Boards were considering many subjects, from systems of training to the style of American helmets. Officers grew weary of being taken away from their regular duties to serve on boards, which sometimes meant parliamentarism when action was important.

Our close-fitting uniform, with its plaster-tight ornamental pockets, which made a fountain pen bulge out as if it were inserted under the skin, and its choke collar confounding the pulsations of the carotid, was very smart-looking when it was pressed, but some of our officers, when they wanted room for a notebook, a purse, or their latest memorandum of requirements for beating the Germans in their branch, envied the loose-fitting British blouse with its lapel collar and pockets ample enough to carry a sandwich for luncheon, a map and a small library of notebooks.

The fact that thousands of officers at home were already fitted with the choke collar and were learning to do without pockets was one reason for not

making the change. Another reason was a desire to retain a uniform already established as distinctly American.

Should an officer be allowed to drive his car or must all driving be done by chauffeurs, as in the British army? What color were our cars to be painted? What regulations were to govern civilian visitors to our zone? What uniform were the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. workers to wear? What kind of identity cards were officers and men to carry? Was every soldier to have his photograph on his card? The pass problem was vital, as it laid upon us a responsibility to our allies in safeguarding military secrets against espionage. All such details must be considered in relation to the systems of the British and the French, who admitted that they might make many changes if they were starting the war afresh.

No one problem was dissociated with another. The problem of control touched the State Department in Washington, which had charge of issuing passports to Americans who wished to visit France. It was decided that no one should come unless he would assist in some way in winning the war, which was construed to exclude the wives of army officers from following their husbands. A privilege granted to one wife must be granted to all, which might mean a colony of several thousand wives in Paris or elsewhere in the rear of the lines, who would have as much opportunity of seeing their husbands as the orders about leave would permit. Besides, Mr. Hoover, who counted the populations of Europe in daily rations, wanted to transport food for no one

in Europe who might be fed at home, hopefully, in part, by her own war gardening. Of course some enterprising wife was found to enlist as a worker in the Red Cross. The husband of the lady who made the test case was enlightened by the information that any wife who succeeded in evading the regulation would find that her husband had been ordered home as the result of her enterprise. If there was any one thing every officer in France did not want, it was to be ordered home.

What of the volunteer hospitals and the ambulance associations in France? Were they still to continue their service under French auspices or were they to be absorbed into our army? Naturally, their workers wanted to serve under their own flag, but they had an affection for their units which they would have liked to keep intact. Centralization required that the units should come into the fold and army homogeneity that they should lose their identity.

The ambulance drivers had a distinctive uniform resembling the British; their work had been widely exploited; the *Croix de Guerres* they had won were the tokens of their heroism. For the most part they were young college men. Of course, the letters of recommendation requisite before a man's services would be accepted were not always a guarantee that youth bound to the wars would bear itself with the propriety of a major general or a college dean when off duty. Some drivers had rich fathers and others were dependent upon the allowance received from the associations. Character was subject to the usual human variations under European influences, with

some false judgments formed because of the conduct of a few when they were on leave in Paris. If some men who arrived after our entry into the war were not of the standard previously set, this was no reflection on their predecessors, who had done a noble work whether called by adventure or solely by a desire to help France.

All wanted to go into the army as commissioned officers, which was not an uncommon desire among the youth of America at this time. Before the associations were taken over, those whose period of enlistment was up appeared in numbers at headquarters with the wistfulness of youth thrilled by the sight of the flag at the entrance. There they met the disillusioning question, " Have you had any regular military training? " which made one sympathetic with their disappointment, as they spoke a faltering " No, sir."

Instruction in ambulance driving did not include familiarity with the orders necessary to take a platoon of infantry out of its billets, march it to a field and put it through a morning's drill. That was only a part of the requirements, they found, if you were to pass the examinations to become an officer, unless you could qualify as a specialist in languages or in some other technical branch which would make you useful enough on the Staff to be made an exception to the rule.

A few entered the army through this back entrance; others went to the artillery school at Fontainebleau as student officers; others continued to drive; others enlisted as privates, hoping to win the coveted bars from the ranks; and others returned

home to try for later officers' training camps. It was a sad anomaly that most of them would have fared better in their ambitions to serve in our army if they had remained at home instead of making their Odyssey abroad, where their gallant service was one of the factors of material expression of our sympathy with the Allies in the days when we were officially neutral.

The time came when a youth appearing in the streets of Paris in the old ambulancier's uniform was accosted by a military policeman and told to report to the Provost Marshal's office, where he learned that if he were not going into the army or had not found other occupation he must return to the States. Thus, the uniform familiar to Parisians for two years disappeared from the streets; and the associations' reputation for the work they had done was not subject to any reflection due to unrepresentative idlers.

There was hardship for some individuals; but the mills of democracy, organizing against the Prussian system under the directing hand of soldiers, must work hardship on many individuals. The regular army was in charge; and being regular it liked things regularized. Definite lines had to be drawn, cut where they would. Either an American in France was to be in uniform or he was not. If he were, then he was subject to army discipline.

We were setting up a military kingdom in France for military purposes which must be responsible for all the details which make for efficiency and good conduct. These include morals; and the morals of youth who came to France were in the keeping of

the army, in the fullness of the authority which it had received from the people. An immoral army is not a good army these days, which permits, in this connection, reference to that scourge of armies which afflicted oversea troops in the early days of the war.

A division surgeon's talk to a gathering of our soldiers embodied the sound military ethics on the subject which were to be applied. He told them that it was their duty to the country as men, to their comrades and to society to live cleanly, but if they lacked self-control, precautions must be rigidly enforced to protect others from contamination, to the end that the man whom his country had trained and sent abroad should not be in hospital as the result of his transgressions, while others who had not transgressed fought his battles for him.

Paris of the boulevards we know is not the real Paris, which goes about its day's work sanely and normally; but to the imagination of some youth Paris is found to be the boulevards. What officer or man did not look forward to seeing Paris before his return? The very word has exercised a spell over the world for centuries. Who was not disappointed that his route of travel from port to training camp did not pass through Paris? Who did not want to spend his leave there?

Again, the stern direction that was aiming to mold a force for a stern business interfered with desire. Neither officer nor man was to go to Paris, except on duty. When we had won battles the restrictions might be relaxed. For the moment the business in hand was to prepare to win battles. The

Puritan strain which unconsciously predominates in us came out strongly in France as well as at home, where the number of prohibition States was increasing and we were considering the abolition of the manufacture of all spirituous liquor and an officer might not have a cocktail in his own club, while the French continued to drink wine temperately with their meals and the English to take their ale according to the habit of generations. It was clear that General Pershing meant to have a moral army according to our strictest moral notions, and the principles established at the outset were not only to be an increasing element of our military strength, but also such as to react upon our citizenship after the war.

A prescribed military régime may produce a healthy body without producing a healthy mind or developing that spirit requisite to determined and skillful action. While the Englishman fighting across the Channel from his hedgerows and the Frenchman fighting on his soil spent their leaves with their families, how were we to provide our men with a substitute for the influences of home? How entertain them? How give them ethical direction? How supplement the work of the Army Medical Corps in caring for the sick and wounded?

All America which was not of draft age had put one hand on its purse and held up its other in its offers to help. Only say the word and we might have a dozen volunteer welfare workers for every soldier, which, incidentally, would be one way for the worker to reach France. The same policy of centralization which absorbed the ambulance asso-

ciations, acting in harmony with that of the War Department, turned to the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A., the Knights of Columbus and the Salvation Army which were to be materialized as auxiliaries with a monopoly of welfare work, to avoid the confusion of overlapping humanitarian efforts without supervision when Mrs. Jones is allowed to have her own hospital unit, Mr. Smith his own ambulance section or recreation hut and Mr. Robinson his own lecture course, with all other volunteers claiming the free field of equal privilege for their activities.

Broadly, the division of functions was that the Red Cross looked after the sick and the wounded and the Y. M. C. A. and the Knights of Columbus looked after entertainment and lectures and supplemented army supplies by their sales booths in their "huts," while the Salvation Army did personal work of the character with which it is associated. All workers were required to be in uniform; all must have army passes; all were subject to the discipline of their organization under army direction. Each organization might take a map of France, lay out its programme and send out its own outposts of initial organization in keeping with army plans. Each had problems of its own as acute in their way as the army's.

If you asked in August, 1917, about the size of our force in France, your information was subject to the qualification of "inclusive or exclusive of the Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. personnel and newspaper correspondents." Every ship brought its quota of workers, of commissions to study the situation and lecturers who were to appeal for funds

when they returned. Anyone who had authority to go abroad in 1917 was a marked man in his community. He had a chance "to do something" and if you were not "doing something" you put yourself under your own personal suspicion of being a slacker.

The shadow of tonnage lay across the desks of the chiefs of the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. as dark as across the C.-in-C.'s. Any arriving volunteer who had brought with him a shipload of supplies would have been as welcome as a relief party to stranded polar explorers. Each had ideas about what should be done for our "boys"; America teemed with ideas. A dozen millionaires in the lobby of the Red Cross Building found that their money would not buy motor cars or trucks when none was for sale. Their helplessness, in view of their power at home, was a trifle diverting to some of us who were poor. Mostly they were eager and serious, but some wanted only a trip to the front and to look around before returning home; for war does not recast human nature.

The Red Cross, though it had no American wounded to look after, did not want for a field where its workers and its funds could afford practical aid in the humbler quarters of Paris or of other towns stricken by three years of war. While our army was as yet delivering no blows, they could help strengthen the *morale* of the French people to bear the strain of another winter. The Y. M. C. A. had its mission set in establishing huts at the scattered camps, where the soldiers might write letters, buy French chocolate and French cigarettes when

American chewing-gum and cigarettes were wanting, hear the phonograph play its latest airs, and enjoy a debauch of the movies, or listen to serious talks by well-known speakers.

How were the projectors of a great hut system to secure labor and material for building their huts when the army was struggling to get barracks built? They had to go out and "rustle" in the hope of getting something from the French which the army did not need or had overlooked. The building of one hut in the summer of 1917 was a greater accomplishment than the building of a score in the summer of 1918. Association chiefs at home, in view of the speed with which the American training camps arose, might have thought that everybody who went to France was suddenly struck with sleeping sickness, judging by the slow progress made, had it not been for the numerous commissioners who returned home with reports about the obstacles European representatives had to overcome.

VIII

BUILDING AN ORGANIZATION

The new headquarters in the field—Hard work in crowded offices—The professional soldier's hours of duty—A hive with very few drones—Forming a General Staff—The German General Staff—Pershing says we *must* have a General Staff—Weeding out officers with routine minds—Organizing the Staff as specialists—Our opportunities for forming a General Staff as contrasted with the British—Promotions and new officers—Reserve officers.

EVERYBODY concerned was delighted at the thought of being nearer the troops and quit of Rue Constantine, which had been unreal as a headquarters, when early in September we moved to Lorraine. The phrase "Headquarters in the Field," as everybody knows, had ceased to apply on the Western front, with its stationary warfare, where commanders settled down in châteaux to a regular routine of existence and planted their gardens in the spring. Sir Douglas Haig has been in the same town for three years. Marshal Joffre was at Chantilly for two years.

General Pershing, with only one division as yet in his command, might not count on any offensive which would require him to pack up and move at an early moment once he had left Paris and established himself with his army. He wanted to be at a point where his commanders could see him and

he could see the things most essential for his personal supervision with the least possible travel. Requisite office space and living space for the personnel of the growing central organization were available in the hotels of a famous summer resort; but because of their geographic location they had to yield to the more advantageous one of a town in the neighborhood of the training area and at the hub of a half-wheel of the southern part of the trench lines, about equidistant from a possible American sector anywhere from Alsace to Champagne, in the days before unity of command, resulting from the German offensive of March, 1918, scattered our divisions from Alsace to the North Sea.

As the French staff offices reflect, along with a military atmosphere, an atmosphere of Paris business offices and the British one of London business offices, so ours were to reflect that of an office building in New York or Chicago. In no detail more noticeably than in this did our national characteristics express themselves in the application to our needs of our observation of Allied methods. Where a French or a British Staff might scatter in different buildings, our fondness for concentration led us, through the influence of natural inclinations, to choose a group of old French barracks buildings as our offices, to the edification of our allies, who were ever curious about each revelation of American thoughts and habits.

We like new things, we like brightness and we like change. To scour the venerable floors with steel filings, to whitewash and scrub, to set desks where the soldiers had had their bunks, to cut doors

through old partitions and build new ones, to put in sanitary plumbing and to start typewriters in their medley of orders, requisitions and memoranda were all in keeping with our national propensities, not to mention that the alterations were serving notice, in common with all our plans, that we were getting ready for a long war. That headquarters was as American as Private John Smith, of Nebraska, in his campaign hat and his broad-toed shoes; as American as our tendency to tear down an old apartment house in order to build one with the latest improvements. Any corporation head at home would have approved the arrangements as being thoroughly businesslike, with the General's own office in the central room of the central building, his Chief of Staff across the hall and his principal subordinates all within easy summons.

Who that has lived and worked at headquarters will ever forget that barracks square where the automobiles came and went, where the headquarters detachment drilled or batted up flies over the clean-swept space in the late afternoon; or the French and American flags at the entrance, or the sentry at the General's house down the street, who did not want for exercise when he had to salute each passing member of the increasing commissioned personnel?

Those who served there in later days, when an American telephone girl would either give you any office in ten seconds or tell you that the wire was busy, or put you on long distance to Paris or a division headquarters or a port clear across France, and when the Signal Corps operators clicked off their

telegrams with the speed of night press messages—well, they little know the troubles of the pioneers who fought battles over that overtaxed French telephone and telegraph system without supplies. With everyone too busy to think of the troubles of others, those same pioneers did not quite realize the task that the quartermaster had in preparing the barracks for the reception of the Staff which was to leave Paris one day and be at work in headquarters the next.

The Staff had ordered what it needed. But who was the quartermaster to order it from in turn? Generals and chiefs of sections, once they knew the location, sent on their own scouts to look for houses, not to mention cooks. Alas! every general might not get the best house in town after the C.-in-C.'s. All officers must have billets and all field clerks must be provided for, and regulations covering all contingencies must be established.

If a desk were not forthcoming for your office, then get a table. You must have something besides your knee to work on when you were dealing with your little portion of that project for an army of a million or two or three million men; and when any minute the General might call on you for a report on progress, surprise you by what he knew about what you were doing, perhaps surprise you in some other respects and perhaps send you out of the room with a word and a smile that made you think you were serving your country well. Attach a printed card with your name to your desk or table in order that he who hurried through the halls might read and then try to use your influence to share

another officer's stenographer if you had not one of your own.

Work was the gospel of Headquarters. Every morning as early as eight o'clock the movement of officers and clerks began along the road to the offices. An hour for luncheon; an hour and a half for dinner, and then back to the grind after dinner, sometimes until midnight! Each branch had its own mess, with a mess president engaged in imparting secrets of American cuisine to a French cook. All the talk was shop; openly, irresistibly, shop. In one mess, artillery was going to win the war; in anothers, it was the engineers; in another, aviation; and in another, the Medical Corps or the Adjutant General's department. Officers who at army posts may have had only four or six hours a day duty, such was the enthusiasm of meeting their new responsibilities, could now hardly detach themselves from the treadmill when the C.-in-C. gave orders that everyone must have two hours' exercise a day.

It is for war that the professional soldier trains. War had come; great war. It was his hour of opportunity; for service, for distinction, for promotion. The eagerness of the runner at the starting-post possessed him if he were young. A visitor who had an inclination to gossip as he approached a desk, received a handshake and a greeting, a moment's attention to see if he had any business, and if he had not, the hand that gave the shake took up a paper from the "Incoming" basket. Thus, a philanderer who was slow of appreciation might be dispatched from one desk to another until he had touched base at every desk in Headquarters without

ever having a chance to discuss the war situation because everybody was too busy to think of the Kaiser's or President Wilson's job or anybody's job except his own. When the first news of the Italian disaster was told to one officer, he merely looked up from his laden desk to exclaim: "That means we have all the more to do to win this war!"

There was waste motion, of course, and perhaps some men went through the pantomime of being busy in order to keep in fashion. Indeed, unless you had papers on your desk and wrote reports and orders you were under suspicion of being a drone in the hive. It required shrewd oversight to find out who was "getting something done" and who was just "doing something," which was one of the duties the C.-in-C. especially took unto himself. The question asked about every officer of senior rank was, "Is he an organizer?" Each thought that he was, whether he was or not, and there were certainly others who thought that he was not—a statement that must sound as familiar in the War Department as at G. H. Q. in France.

The purpose of all this effort, aside from getting on with the business in hand, was to create a General Staff on European lines adaptable to our needs in France, which included at the same time the search for who was capable of appreciating the character of a General Staff as a first requirement for assisting in its creation. All men with any military understanding had agreed in theory that we ought to have a Staff. We had started the nucleus of one after the Spanish War and it had remained a nucleus which was consulted, but little considered. Some

strong personality, sometimes an adjutant general rather than the Chief of Staff, became predominant as we know; while the different departments were inclined to be compartmental in the administration routine of our small army.

The significance of the continually heralded fact that the German General Staff through its organization had been the driving and guiding force of German military success had not been altogether understood by our public. A woman who associated it very properly with something sinister and wicked, that favored atrocities and ruthlessness, said to me, "They say we ought to have a Staff. Hasn't that German Staff caused all the trouble?" It would have caused the Allies infinitely more trouble if there had not been a skillful French Staff which could hold its own against the German Staff.

To the soldier in the trenches a Staff is often the symbol of some secret and distant power, responsible for all plans and orders, of which he is the pawn. If he wants supplies, if his attack fails, subordinates say that it is due to bad "Staff work," which fixes the responsibility in current phrase while it proves the importance of an efficient General Staff.

Every Staff makes mistakes. The number of its mistakes is reckoned in the lives of soldiers. Its blunders mean piles of dead, with no object gained. The tribute which every professional soldier pays to the German General Staff is born of the admiration which aspires to have an organization as capable as that in fighting for our principles in the chess play against the enemy and his principles, when the question of which set of principles shall survive must

be settled by violence. It is the complex organization of the Staff which keeps touch with the location of the enemy's units or his battle order, thus foreseeing his plans; which takes from him his latest development in tactics for prompt application to your own ends; which lays out the plans of attack; which strives to be ahead of him in improvements in arms or in methods; which coördinates all branches, all parts as well as *morale* and purpose, into a homogeneous force which shall gain by the skill of organization the greatest result at the least cost in life. Its tentacles reach into the enemy's country; into the psychology of his troops no less than of your own. It should be argus-eyed and multiple-fingered. All studies in efficiency, all measures for saving time and lowering working costs and for increasing output by concentration and labor-saving devices are the business counterparts of the functions of a General Staff.

A good Staff tries to buy in the cheapest and sell in the dearest market; and the coin of the market is casualties. If it yields ground it aims to make the enemy pay heavily for his success; if it attacks, it aims to pay as little as possible for its gains, thinking always in the terms of the transaction as a whole in much the same way that a department store which cuts prices in a drive on one article as an incentive to profitable sales in another. Russia was Germany's cheapest market. Probably she got four or five Russians for every German soldier she expended.

Both the French and German Staffs before the war held to the opinion that a competent Staff could

not be created during a war. It must be the product of years of training in time of peace, which accumulated a body of experts who would have such a start over any group of beginners as would enable them to keep the lead. The British, who had a nucleus, had to create a system for directing a big army and they did it, though the task was costly. We also must create a Staff—*must* is a strong persuader when General Pershing speaks the word. He had been on our General Staff in Washington in its early days and appreciated the value of a Staff.

As the authority was his to build an organization to suit his purposes, those old barracks buildings were to witness a development which would have been startling to some retired generals had they viewed it in a club corner in Washington. No one wanted to follow the model of the German Staff system in its diabolical tendencies and secret processes for gratifying a lust of power, which had allowed the order of one man to plunge the world into the vortex of hell; but we did want an organization which should make the most of the brains and the spirit in us for battle action, to prevent free men of our flesh and blood and traditions from being needlessly sacrificed by the superior technique of the enemy, using servile men as its pawns.

Our army organization at home had administered posts and territorial divisions. It had little reason for considering any force larger than a battalion as a mobile body which required tactical direction in the presence of an enemy. This kind of administration developed routine minds. Step by step, promotions brought the seniors in rank to the top to sign the

orders of routine. Younger men had worn out their enterprise by the time they had brigadiers' stars on their shoulders.

With only six thousand officers in our regular army, each having a number which advanced every time a higher number on the list was retired, if the hundreds of thousands of our youth were not to be led to sacrifice in the field, if we were to learn the first principles of the technique of buying in the cheapest market and selling in the dearest, we must make use of those officers, whatever their place on the list, who had been marked among their fellows for exceptional ability or at least for exceptional energy. It was not a time for considering the susceptibilities of Major General X or Brigadier General Z, though their hairs were white and their careers spotless. Yet they were there. They had the rank and they would not have been human if they had not been tenacious in the hour of opportunity of the rights of seniority, which had been the goal of ambition gained, under the old régime, only by the long service to their credit. As Roman veterans pointed to their wounds in the Forum, so our elder officers would state the number of years they had been in the army.

To put it simply: One section of the new Staff looked after transport; another, supplies; another, information; another trained the soldier and another directed him in battle. Or, to put it more elaborately, one group of experts had charge of bringing troops and supplies overseas and of regulating tonnage and tonnage replacements; another, of supplying the army with all its requirements, from

wagons to motors, with all that the soldier eats and wears and all the weapons he uses in battle and the bandages for his wounds; another, of the training of the soldiers and the officers in the field and in all the schools of specialism, being responsible for coördinating all the processes to the desired end of maximum efficiency of man-power and material. Another group kept a check on all possible sources of enemy espionage, supplied the maps required by our forces, kept informed of the enemy's dispositions and his *morale,* sought out his secrets and analyzed all sources of information into minute reports for still another group which were experts in the handling of troops, responsible for troop movements and dispositions, for all strictly military operations and all tactical arrangements and all strategic plans for battle. The Sections were known as G-1, G-2, G-3, G-4 and G-5, and taken altogether as the " G's."

There was nothing new in the general outline of this system. Founded upon the experience of all great armies, it was something as proven by test as the system of president, vice-president, board of directors and general manager for a corporation. Accomplishment, as in everything else in this world, resolved itself back to the men who had the work to do. Because a man was young, ambitious and energetic did not mean that he was fit for responsibility. His seniors might be his superiors in judgment and energy. The Staff system was right but it would fail if personnel failed.

Each group had its representatives in the corps and divisions in touch with the chief of staff of

section, as the head of each group was called, who must be a trained soldier in directing toward military ends the efforts of the great railroad builder, lawyer, surgeon, engineer, chemist or contractor from civil life. Every mile of track laid, every pier built, every warehouse constructed and its location, every blow of a hammer must fit into the general plan.

The chiefs of the G's met at ten o'clock in the morning with the chief of the General Staff in his office, where they made their reports, conferred and received instructions; and later they held meetings of the subordinates of their own sections. Through the Chief of Staff and through the Commander-in-Chief, this "brain trust," as the line called it, had its policies executed when they were approved; and they might be colonels, while the Surgeon General, the Quartermaster General, or the Chief of Ordnance responsible for administration were brigadier generals.

A black stripe around the sleeve and a star on the collar were the insignia of this inner cabinet of suggestive and creative authority, which the line regarded with something of the feelings that a mining engineer in a distant camp in Mexico has for the New York office contingent.

"When I go up to the front I put my arms behind me so they won't see my black stripes," said one Staff officer, "but when I'm around Headquarters I hold them up for everybody to see."

If a Staff officer appears in the trenches, the occupants, who are the objects of his organization, do not mind a little extra artillery fire for his edifica-

tion. Though a Staff position might be considered a " cushy job " by the unknowing, it was not sought; or, if it were, the seeker was usually unfitted for it. The ambition of each chief of section was to get command of a regiment or a brigade, or, at least, to see battle service of some kind; and General Pershing proposed that this ambition should be gratified.

Regardless of the practice of other European staffs, which held to the principle that each man should stick to the post for which he was best qualified, he established the principle of rotation, which meant that no group of men would order others into battle without tasting battle as subordinates themselves. His idea, as he expressed it, was that every officer should " know troops." The first indication that a Staff officer was becoming remote on that subject sent him to a school where the training was in no wise theoretical. Thus, a chief of section might find himself commanding a regiment under the chief of staff of a division, perhaps his junior, who was applying to him the methods of an organization which he had helped to devise.

In our task of building a General Staff for handling a large army in action, with officers of the French Staff as our intimate instructors, we had some advantages which the British lacked, though these very advantages implied certain disadvantages. The British were plunged into the thick of the fighting within less than three weeks after Britain entered the war; and their Staff development was in the course of the relentless fighting at Mons, on the Aisne and in the Ypres salient. They applied

their lessons reeking from trenches bloody with murderous losses. The Allied armies formed a wall behind which we had time to study both French and British systems; and what we had learned could be applied in the quiet sectors which we occupied at first as a preparation for active sectors.

But I am getting ahead of my chronology, which is September, when only the nuclei of the sections were forming, and their authority was in the inceptive stage, and when departmental system still held, with all requisitions going for approval to the Adjutant General's department, snow-bound with papers, which, later, was to be restricted to records and statistics and cognate details. The Staff sections waited as all the armed forces of the United States waited, upon officer personnel from the training camps at home. A harbinger of the creation of the National Army, as the pupils got their commissions, was a renewed outburst of promotions for regular officers.

It was an era of universal congratulations as old comrades met in the barracks square and chatted about the rank and assignments of friends in the service. Leaves fell on shoulders which had borne bars and eagles came to rest, until stars should take their places, on shoulders that had borne leaves. Brigadier generals were becoming quite common and even major generals were appearing with a frequency that made them less awesome. The real distinction, as a chief of section said, was with the youngster who was the only second lieutenant at headquarters for awhile. He felt quite important about it until a small consignment of second lieu-

tenants appeared, when he was interested to know whether or not any of them "ranked" him.

More regular officers were arriving from home and many reserve officers, erect, clear-eyed and soldierly from the physical régime they had undergone, were hurried to Europe because of special fitness for some branch of Staff work. Chiefs of sections and departments, as they received congratulations, announced that they had new assistants with the glee that goes with a prospective increase of business. The newcomers, as they were given tables in the crowded rooms and settled down to learn their duties, looked forward to the time when they should have a tour with the French and British armies for instruction at first hand from veterans. The French mission in the house at the gate had these assignments to consider among its other numerous responsibilities in keeping the course of Allied relations running smoothly, ranging from questions of policy, which brought the chief of mission to call on the General or the Chief of Staff, to claims by French civilians, tangles in billeting and requisitions and locating lost passes; from difficulties due to too much initiative on the part of our officers in their search for material to interference with French customs by an American major.

Later, the major generals commanding our new divisions at home and high ranking officers began to arrive on tours of observation. They had to be indoctrinated in Staff methods and taken to visit the front where they might see in practice what they knew only in theory, in order that they might return to America better equipped for their work in co-

ordinating the preparations at home with the preparations in France. Not to mention its tax on the hospitality of the French and the British armies, "indoctrination" became a byword which made bureau chiefs lecturers-at-large at the same time that they were schoolmasters of their own personnel.

Two worlds, regular and reserve, existed in the one common world of effort. The regulars were as a family whose numbers had known one another through the army list, if at one time or another they had not served together, as they usually had. Their talk when they met was suggestive of the alumni gathering of a college class. They spoke a language of their own which was the product of their environment. The reserves could become acquainted by asking one another from what college they were graduated; and possibly they would find that they had friends in common.

Among the elder men were many who had been chiefs in their own world, used to riding in their own cars from fine homes to comfortable offices. They got billets of small rooms without baths and were assigned to some of the small tables in a Staff section to do clerical work under a young regular officer as their immediate superior, who wished that their training had included more instruction in army methods in which the old army clerks had an expertness that was another contributing factor in reducing the sense of importance of the reserve officers who wanted to serve their country in time of war.

But they had their moments of consolation, for army forms were subject to a fluctuating process of change as the result of the C.-in-C.'s demand for

reform before finality was reached in the operations of subordinates. It was none other than a chief of section who exclaimed one day: "What is the right form for preparing a telegram now, anyway?" Or, as another Staff officer said: "You find us in another process of reorganization. It takes time. The old system is well intrenched, but we took another salient yesterday, and the C.-in-C. says we are to dig in and hold our gains."

IX

FAITH IN THE RIFLE

The road to the training area—Plans transformed into camps—Slow growth of barracks—A modern Valley Forge in Lorraine—The Marines again—The reorganized First Division—British instructors as well as French—The rifle not an obsolete weapon for Americans—Advanced training—A dress rehearsal before Marshal Joffre.

It was always with the joy of spirit and body released from bondage that I left the mental sweatshop of those barrack offices for the open where vigorous men, after the day's drill, slept soundly without any fits of wakefulness over problems that lay between "incoming" and "outgoing" baskets on a desk. The soldier has only to obey commands and countercommands, whether they are foolish or wise. He drills; he marches; he fights—and offers his life at the hazard.

There was no road in France which I knew better than that leading from Headquarters into the training area. The faces of all the women, or their children, who opened the railroad gates were familiar. The husbands and fathers were away at the war, or were dead on "the field of honor." There was the woman who was always smiling in all weathers, sturdy enough to have lifted the gate by main strength if necessary; the very businesslike woman who received your thanks with a dignified acknowledgment, and

one woman who would never smile—a most unusual human being in France. Perhaps the bitterness of war had settled into her soul.

The road had its clear straight stretches, but mostly it was winding with the purpose of avoiding the wooded hills, always in sight, and picking up various villages on the way. I knew it in summer before the crops were harvested and it revealed only the life of the villages, with groups of German prisoners, regarding an American with stolid curiosity, or groups of French territorials, who were beginning to erect Adrian barracks, and little camps of Signal Corps men who were putting up the poles for an American telegraph line; and, in autumn, when the fierce winds were blowing the dying leaves off the trees and some of the barracks in their unpainted wood ceased to be unattractive blots on the background of finished landscape and old villages as they were occupied by men in khaki, looking strange and unacclimatized; and, in winter, when snow lay on the drill grounds and still more villages and barracks were occupied by battalions which were still later arrivals from home.

Thus I had glimpses of the succeeding stages of development of a plan which I had seen expressed on a map with red diagrams resembling protoplasms in their irregularity of form. Each was to be a training camp for one division, its cabbage, carrot or potato shape the result of combining open spaces as drill grounds with a group of villages and barracks with shelter enough to accommodate a division. There was something reassuring in the number of the protoplasms which suggested that

the programme of troop transport might be kept. The divisions were promised; General Pershing proposed to be ready for them if the War Department made a spurt and caught up with its schedule.

There must be barracks enough for infirmaries at least; and the more men we had living in barracks the more comfortable they would be and the better under control. The want of labor and material hampered us as usual. We might not be able to provide the French with something that we thought would materialize from overseas, which, in turn, prevented their carrying out their part of the plan.

After the ground was broken for barrack sites, many days might elapse before a motor truck began piling up the standardized sections beside the road and then days might elapse before they were touched again because the labor that was to put them together had been required on some more pressing detail. Erecting an Adrian barrack was as simple as erecting a child's house of blocks. It placed no architectural responsibility on the builder once he knew the system for assembling the parts into the structure which is familiar in all the camps in France. After the war, I imagine that these barracks will be moved to the ruined villages as temporary shelter for the returned inhabitants, while starting business again or recovering shell-pestled fields to tillage.

The French officer, who had the task of making the map in the office of the American general commanding the area into reality, gave up making promises based on promises made to him and was doing

his best for sixteen hours a day. He did not build as many barracks as he planned. On our part, we did not catch up with our troop programme until spring. Somehow, we were to get through that Lorraine winter whose recollection will be as distinct to our pioneer divisions as their battles. In repaying the French for assisting us in the Revolution we went through the modern counterpart of a Valley Forge which should further cement the friendship of the two peoples.

After having been drilled all summer, the regiment of Marines which had come with the first convoy in June was withdrawn from the First Division. Although this was most depressing to every officer and man in that it meant that they would not be among the first in the trenches, the service to which they were assigned was in one sense a compliment to qualities which are as inseparable from them as their gallantry. The Marines have traditions, associated with ships' orderliness, which are kept up by competent veteran non-commissioned officers, that make them models in soldierly deportment. An isolated squad or platoon, from the very nature of their training, keeps to form when doing guard duty or police work. Pride of corps sticks to a Marine sentry or messenger though he is separated from any commanding officer.

From all directions our widespread organization was calling for details of this dependable character, and the Marines were chosen to meet the demands. Marines acted as couriers across the Channel; they guarded our construction projects and our property; kept order on piers and in laborers' quarters; acted

as police in Paris and at the ports, carrying out Provost Marshal's instructions with polite firmness in keeping with the impeccable neatness of their uniforms. In their hearts they were wroth, but they were too proud to allow it to influence their correct deportment.

Somewhere between the duties of the army and navy the sea-soldiers who had survived from the days of the three-deckers have kept a place for themselves. In strict military logic they have a place neither in a modern navy organization nor in a modern army organization. From time to time efforts have been made to legislate them out of existence, but they have the trick in practice of keeping a place for themselves on the quarter-deck and making one in all expeditions overseas owing to the friends they gain and their conduct whether charging machine guns or policing an ammunition dump. They think well of themelves in order to insure that the rest of the world will think the same.

Talk to them of being absorbed into the army and they exhibit a willingness to be agreeable by absorbing the army if that will serve the purpose of doing away with the anomaly of a separate military organization in France, with its own recruiting and replacement system and pay department. They had to go into the army uniform under duress of necessity when no material for their own forest green was forthcoming, but though in khaki they kept their globe and anchor insignia on their collars. When I asked a Marine sentry in front of one of our army offices in Paris how he liked his work, he said:

"Very well, sir. It will fit me for a job after the war. I can wear a striped waistcoat and brass buttons and open cab doors in front of a New York hotel."

His ingrowing misery lest he be kept at this peaceful assignment was natural but groundless. He would have his fill of fighting; for the Marines were kept in mind as one of the factors in the consummation of a plan.

After the withdrawal of the Marines, the First Division was brought up to full strength as a complete regular division composed of the 16th, 18th, 26th and 28th regiments of infantry and the First Artillery Brigade of the 5th, 6th and 7th artillery regiments. Were they never going into the trenches? the men asked. Experts said that they were ready; and they were certain that they were. Generals Pétain, Castelnau and Foch had inspected them and pronounced glowing opinions. President Poincaré had seen them march past in review in his honor and had spoken eloquently to their officers.

"Wait until Joffre inspects us!" one soldier said. "I'll bet that will be the real signal that we are going in."

Another French infantry division had come to take the place of the *chasseurs alpins* in coaching the First. A group of British instructors had appeared to add their vigorous training in certain specialties, particularly the bayonet in which the British excelled. Not being embarrassed by any fear of misunderstandings due to language difficulties they had less reason for being as polite as the French even if it had been in their nature.

"I thought that I told you to dig a trench last night," said a British officer to a young lieutenant. "I hope you don't call this one."

"The men were tired and the ground was hard," explained the lieutenant.

"No excuses! Rotten work!" was the reply, which the young lieutenant thought sounded very homelike.

While as beginners with claims to experience, we strove to learn all the lessons of our teachers, General Pershing, the final and responsible instructor and inspector, insisted upon a single feature which was in keeping with our own army traditions. It was that our men should learn how to shoot. Three years of trench warfare had had a pronounced influence on the tacticians of the Western front. In the course of digging an endless maze of trenches perhaps they had dug themselves into certain mental ruts.

Infantrymen fought from trench to trench. After going over the top from their own trenches, when they gained an objective in their attack, they settled down to organize the enemy's trenches they had taken. Armies lived in trenches, thought in trenches and had become habituated to the use of the hand grenade in defense and offense to the neglect of the rifle, which some extravagant reports had declared an obsolete weapon.

The fact that the man in the trench rarely had a target for his marksmanship was only another proof of the value of the rifle. It was a possible accurate shot from a rifle that kept heads below the parapet; that made you take to a communication

trench five hundred yards or more back of your front line; that sent a thrill of apprehension down the backbone of a man scouting No Man's Land as the German flares lighted up the shell-torn area around him. If infantry had to "dig in" in the open, rifle fire was a controlling factor in mapping their line. The retreat from Mons was covered by the thin lines of British infantry, which had been taught how to shoot, coolly pouring an accurate fire into the advancing Germans.

If confidence in his bayonet impels a soldier forward to close quarters in a charge, good marksmanship makes the soldier in offense and defense hold fast in his confidence that he knows how to make every bullet count. Even the British had strayed from the lessons of Mons and the first battle of Ypres, where, outnumbered five to one, British regular reserves, having no grenades, knowing nothing of their use, stuck to their trenches through the artillery preparation with the survivors from the torrent of shell fire stopping the German charges with their rifle fire. Jackson's sharpshooters at New Orleans were not out of date except in their smoothbores; and never can be as long as a soldier carries as his own arsenal a weapon which, as he lies hidden in a thicket or under cover of a redoubt, will send a messenger of death farther than any ball or explosive he can throw.

When reports became current that Allied soldiers had become so addicted to the grenade habit that they watched Germans in flight at a distance of three or four hundred yards in the open without shooting at them, the tacticians of the Western front realized

that it was time to look beyond trench walls to some of the first principles of war. Before this, General Pershing had sent word to Washington saying that "thorough instruction and range practice as prescribed in our small arms firing manual was necessary" in our training camps, and that he wanted every one of our new soldiers to be an excellent shot, which was something the soldier might learn at home, and even better there because of the difficulty of securing good ranges in the thickly populated areas of France.

I have in mind an occasion when he was present at a "critique" which followed the execution of a problem ordered by him at short notice to be carried out under his eye. Our battalions had advanced in the customary waves to the taking of positions under artillery preparation according to the established principles of the limited objective. They had bombed the enemy out of strong points; "mopped up" the enemy trenches which they had taken; established their machine guns for the defense of the ground they had gained and performed all other details in a most satisfactory manner.

Our battalion commanders, who had worked out their own systems of attack after the problem had been set for them, gathered with the company officers concerned to hear what that very erect, spare and politely incisive French general and his staff experts and their own General Pershing had to say about the way they had done their work. Each officer reviewed his plan in the light of results, answered questions and awaited criticism.

There was all the simplicity and dignity of the

proceedings of the French academy in this pedagogic council on the science of war on a hillside slashed with practice trenches with the countryside utterly quiet on a misty day as veteran experts brought home to our minds the situations which we should have had to consider if any actual enemy had been against us. Some of those strong points reduced in theory would not have been reduced in fact; our soldiers instead of lying about at ease, their maneuver over, would now be in the thick of a counter barrage.

It was not the first time they had received such intimations; and their answering thought was that they wanted to be done with mimicry and have a chance at the real thing. As an old sergeant said: "The way to learn to fight is to learn to fight," which is a trick phrase, of course. Men who have not learned anything about fighting before they go into a battle sometimes survive if they start early from the field and run fast enough.

As the autumn drew on, the French people, in the reaction of their false expectations from the great ado made over the landing of the first expedition in France, began to wonder if we were ever going into the trenches. Did the flights of officers in automobiles, our urgent efforts in scouring France for material, our scattered start in the building of depots and our elaborate plans signify that we meant to make only an industrial effort? Surely we were a strange people.

Families who had hoped that our youth would release the older Frenchmen in the trenches, bringing father and husband home for the winter, took

a personal interest in the question. Many inferences might be drawn in gossip behind the curtains of censorship under the inspiration of secret German propaganda. If we were really eager to fight wouldn't we have sent in some of our units mixed with the British and French long ago? asked bespectacled Germans in Switzerland who said that America was only "pluffing."

But the French class of 1918, as I have noted, had a year of training before going into the trenches. Some of the men of the First Division had been in uniform only six months. A few thousand American soldiers more or less in the line were immaterial in the military calculation which embraced the millions of the British and French armies on the Western front. One division could not take over a permanent sector. It might be the object of an attack, which would put it *hors de combat* as any one of hundreds of the best divisions of the European armies had been in a few hours when the enemy chose to concentrate upon it in overwhelming force; and, in that case, where would be our trained division or divisions for replacement? Where would be General Pershing's independent command which he was under instructions to establish?

The soldier's guess was right. We went into the line shortly after Father Joffre visited the training camp. That sturdy soldier, rich in military wisdom, his fame secure, who had summoned our soldiers to Europe, was a more striking figure in a more striking scene than on an occasion when the multitudes cheered him at home as he saw our soldiers, ready now to take their part. Yet before the curtain went

up on America in the line, there was another dress rehearsal when the First Division had a period of three days serving in practice trenches under conditions like the real thing, in the drizzling cold rain that wet the men to the skin and flooded dugouts.

X

SOME FIRSTS FOR THE FIRST

The First Division starts for the front—Secrecy of the move—A quiet sector—Apprehensions of the natives at the appearance of our troops—Our presence might mean fighting—Gradual introduction to trench warfare—The first shot—The first relief for the trenches—The first prisoner—The first wounded man—The first German raid—Our first dead—The three graves at Bathlemont—Life in the trenches—At the gun pits.

ATHLETES who know the meaning of a break in training will appreciate what the order to move meant to the men of our First Division. They hailed any change of scene from the drill grounds which had seen the hardest work of their lives; but there was a pull at the heartstrings as they parted with friends in the villages where they had been billeted for four months who knew, as they knew, without being told, that they were going into the line.

Many a romance was thus broken off; many children were to miss their big playfellows in khaki. The old men and women felt that a world of vigorous young life was slipping away from them. There would be no more gifts of white bread for family platters. Marie would have no more lessons in "Eenglish" from George "Smeeth" of "Meeseeseepee." George was really from Alabama, but changed his State in order to hear Marie say "Mee-

seeseepee." If he had been from Georgia he might have told her that all men from Georgia were named George. French villagers get much miscellaneous information from our soldiers about our United States.

The men of the First had only a short journey on trains, a journey which was kept very mysterious. They did not know the name of the town where they alighted until they looked at the station sign; and that did not enlighten them particularly, as only officers carried a map. They were not supposed to ask where they were going. What did it matter as long as they were going? France was France to them, without geographic distinctions. They were marched off to other new billets, where they removed their packs and, having made themselves at home, took a look around and began striking up new acquaintances.

They had seen guns on the move before, guns with French gunners who fired barrages for the practice maneuvers; but these they now saw passing along the road had Americans mounted on the horses and the caissons. It was their first glimpse of the division's artillery which had come from its training camp to join up with the infantry. The batteries settled in family groups in the villages, assigned to them; and the whole division awaited further orders. In due course, someone would tell each gunner and each infantryman what to do next and then what next until they arrived at their destination.

The strictest secrecy about the movement was enjoined, although the sector beyond Einville chosen for our introduction to actual trench warfare was

about the quietest on the Western front. Since the great battle of 1914 it had seen no action of account; and, indeed, since the bloody contest of Hartmannsweilerkopf in Alsace had subsided, all the line from Pont-à-Mousson to the Swiss border had been tranquil. Neither side had anything to gain here by attack, a pacific trench existence being as customary in this sector as nagging malice was in the Ypres salient, where the holding of a mile of front was a more costly business than the holding of ten or fifteen or twenty miles in Lorraine. Flanders in 1915, Verdun and the Somme in 1916, Passchendaele in 1917 were death; and through all three campaigns Lorraine was relatively a holiday.

In places the lines were more than rifle range apart. Occasional patrols from both sides kept touch with the situation and permanent outposts maintained a requisite contact. Each side sent over a few shells every day. To increase the number was to draw more fire from the adversary; and then reprisals following on reprisals might develop a state of uncomfortable activity and waste of ammunition which was required for more active sectors. Didn't tired soldiers want some rest between battles? A German division and a French division, which had been mercilessly pounding and sniping and raiding each other at Verdun or in Champagne, if they happened to face each other in Lorraine a week later relaxed as pugilists relax between rounds. When they recovered their strength they would turn violent again directly they met in a violent sector.

Farmers tilled their fields close up to the Lor-

raine trenches. French officers had leave to run in to Nancy, or German officers to run in to Metz, for recreation after their survival from fierce battles elsewhere. Mutual consideration also in some places prevented the bombardment of villages in the back area where the weary battalions were billeted. Aeroplanes kept watch of any signs of a concentration which would indicate that the other side contemplated breaking faith by a real attack. The occasional trench raid necessary for further information and the identification of units was conducted in a strictly economical manner.

Our appearance disturbed the villagers and farmers of the countryside lest we should start the war to going again, and their apprehension threw some light on the reasons for the extraordinary precautions about secrecy. Weren't we Americans? Weren't we going into the line for the first time? There was no telling what kind of a reception the Germans might plan for us. Gallic imagination, not to mention American imagination, indulged in possibilities.

"The Germans are waiting for us. This is the first chance to get at us," as one of our own officers said, expressing the view of many.

He foresaw that German God, whom the Kaiser keeps in attendance, hitting out in one of his rages to make an example of the first Americans in the line, as a warning to inexperienced provincials that they had better keep out of the European war game. By sufficient concentration of artillery and infantry, of course, either the French or Germans could take a given sector of trenches and put an enemy division

out of action any time they chose. This is one of the factors which has kept trench warfare from being wholly monotonous.

But there were two reasons against any such course on this occasion. The first reason implied that the German is not so dense about our character as he is thought to be. As a people we had not yet quite got down to the business of this war; we needed awakening to the real nature of our task. Would the enemy be foolish enough to inflame the whole American public with the hot desire to revenge the sacrifice of the one trained division we had in France? A second reason presupposes that the German is a very capable soldier. He sometimes makes local attacks for the purpose of rousing the offensive spirit of his troops and weakening that of the enemy's; but, ordinarily, he is not going out of his way for a spectacular stroke unless it is part of the development of a general plan. He judges the obstacle of each division in front of him by its fighting ability in relation to his immediate object.

Yet the French command and ours were bound to be on their guard. The same French division which had been our instructors in our later stages of training accompanied us to the front to continue coaching us. Our allies, who had the new people from overseas under observation, by the standards of their old-world customs thought that we might be expected to do the unexpected thing at the unexpected moment if left to our own discretion, once we were in the trenches.

Consider the Canadians! Consider what they had done to quiet sectors on the British front! Not

finding much war in progress in a quiet sector they started to make it an active sector and succeeded. Incidentally, they established a precedent which taught the Germans to keep in mind that the Canadians, the Australians and other wild white men who had come from overseas were of a restless nature and required careful watching. The Americans, if left to themselves, might, in their curiosity and eagerness, set out at once to see if they could not lick the Germans in the opposite trench; and their artillery, thirsting to fire at something besides a range target, would back their charge with barrages which would develop an amount of action that would not only disturb the quiet of Lorraine valleys, but would also interfere with Staff plans.

We were nursed into the trenches with all the care of father teaching son to swim. The French are a thorough people. They believe in no short cuts to learning, but in gradual processes. We were not to start algebra until we thoroughly knew arithmetic, or geometry until we thoroughly knew algebra. General Pershing is also thorough. There are no elective courses at West Point.

Our battalions, three at a time, were to be placed between French battalions in the line in what was to be distinctly considered as another step in our course of training. Every American battery was to be paired off with a French battery. The French regulated the amount of our artillery fire and their observers named the targets. Our battalion commanders could not act without French advice. No patrols could be sent out without French direction. We were entirely under French command.

The artillery moved up on the night of October 22nd. Battery C, of the Sixth Field Artillery, wanted the honor of firing the first shot of the war. Without waiting on going into position at the time set, the men dragged a gun forward in the early morning of October 23rd and sent a shell at the enemy. There was no particular target. The aim was in the general direction of Berlin. This filled the historical requirement which later sent the gun to West Point as a relic. Other artillerists said that they did not see anything professional in being first or in firing without a target, and their guns looked exactly like the one sent to West Point.

The night of October 23rd, when our infantry left their billets for the trenches, was chill and rainy. The scene might have been Flanders and the troops British, in 1915, to one who came out of a doorway and saw the passing helmets of the British type. But it was not Flanders and the troops were American, in 1917. The war had become very intimate through this fact.

"'Mum's the word,' said old sleuth in his gum shoes," as one soldier remarked.

Our French mentors were more self-conscious than when they had "gone over the top" in a great attack. They felt their sponsorship. American officers thought of an emergency occurring when they might not act on their own initiative and might be unable to interpret French instructions. Young lieutenants, at least, would have much preferred to have gone in without a chaperon and taken their chances; the men, too.

The period of relief is a favorite time for attack;

knowledge of the hour at least gives you a target for machine gun and artillery fire. Suppose that the Germans knew that this was the night when we were going in! Anything might happen. The rumble of the little ammunition wagons and the rolling kitchens seemed to make a roar that surely must be audible in the German trenches; the flaming showers of sparks from one of the rolling kitchens surely could be seen. At any minute the German artillery might turn on its blasts.

Down the street you heard a sturdy rhythmic tread; and then a moving shadow, taking form in the darkness, developed into a column of soldiers with their faces much alike in the gloom. For all they knew they might be going into violent action. They had been drilled and drilled and schooled and lectured, warned by their veteran instructors what a tremendous, formidable devil, with all his preparation and experience, the German was in the complicated technique of trench warfare, with its sudden surprises of raid and artillery concentration.

There was nothing downhearted about their mood, as you saw by their faces. They were worried, as were their officers, lest they should make some mistake and not remember all their training in case of a crisis. It did not matter so much to them that they might be killed as that they might be killed in a manner that was contrary to instructions. If they had been told to charge machine guns then and there, I think that they would have let out the cry of hounds off the leash.

They turned off from the roads and were lost in the curtain of night as they followed the paths to

the trenches, whither no detached officer was allowed to follow them. They took the place of the French and found the operation was precisely like the rehearsals that they had been through. The novices had at least shown that they could "take over" without a torchlight procession and a brass band. Though the Germans may have known that a relief was in progress, they did not know that Americans had made it. Morning came and those on outpost duty looked out across the fields of wet, dead grass without seeing any trenches, let alone Germans. Others, coming out of their seeping dugouts, saw the fields of dead grass behind the lines and then had their morning meal from the rolling kitchen. A few shells burst; our artillery sent the customary rejoinders.

Was this all there was to it? Yes, unless you were lucky enough to be included in a patrol into No Man's Land which returned without having had a fight. The French command was gleeful over having introduced us into war society without one untoward incident. American officers could point out where a shell nearly got a rolling kitchen as a proof that we were actually in the line; young lieutenants and the men themselves considered that the show was not up to the advertisements.

On the second day we took our first prisoner, a young fellow who was in the ranks of the Landsturm regiment opposite us, instead of among first-line troops, because he was physically defective. He had lost his way and found himself suddenly at close quarters, which led to a bayonet wound in the abdomen. No prisoner in this war ever received

more attention, though he was quite unconscious of it as he lay dying in our hospital under the solicitous care of all the doctors and attendants, who were balked of their ambition to save the life of the first wounded German who had come under their care.

The first American to be wounded was an officer of the Signal Corps hit by a fragment of shell; and the first soldier gained his right to wear a chevron in the same way. All our hospitals wanted the privilege of receiving these two after they had passed through the division hospital. All the newspaper correspondents wanted intimate details about the novel fact of two wounded Americans in Europe, for reasons that made these two men more interesting than a long casualty list six months later.

Our doctors and nurses, who had arrived in numbers in the early days of the expedition, had been waiting for this opportunity. Distinguished civil surgeons who were Majors in the Reserve Corps found that there was no need yet of a first operation. The only way that the claim of all hospital wards to hospitality could have been satisfied would have been an operation cutting the two wounded men into parts for distribution. Red Cross and chaplains, Y. M. C. A. and Salvation Army also wished to be considered as subject to a moment's call. Why not? We were beginning the war. Shall I ever forget the first wounded man I saw in Belgium in August, 1914?

We were to have another first; one of those incidents which we had been warned against. The Germans who wanted information, which meant prisoners, were not considerate enough to send out cir-

culars announcing the programme of their first raid on us. A box barrage penning some of our men in their dugouts with its hail of projectiles; a rush of phantoms in German gray that was the color of the misty night, and prisoners and dead; and the Germans were gone, leaving blood spots from their wounded whom they had carried away in the darkness—a trick which the Canadians had taught the Germans and in which we were to excel!

Men half a mile away from the scene did not know what had happened. When the news was passed along there was only one thought: to give the Germans a raid in return. Everybody imagined himself slipping into a German dugout and snatching a German prisoner and driving him back across No Man's Land. When they learned that it did not suit French Staff plans that they should have a chance at a "comeback," what our soldiers of the First said was very much like "Oh, h——." Even those who were most regular at church services thought it in the presence of chaplains and Y. M. C. A. workers. Here you have drilled for four months, and then you stand around these muddy trenches and the German slaps you in the face and you are not allowed to hit back! Were we only going to play backstop? Weren't we ever going to have a chance to bat?

Our first dead were buried at Bathlemont on the afternoon of November 4th. A detachment of French sailors along with units of French artillery, engineers, infantry and infantry of our own troops were formed in a square facing the graves. General Bordeaux addressed them. The sense of his

touching speech was that these men had come a long distance and died in hand-to-hand fighting for a cause which could bring them no material gain.

"Thus the death of this humble corporal and of these two private soldiers appears to us with extraordinary grandeur. We will, therefore, ask that the mortal remains of these young men be left here; be left to us forever. We will inscribe on their tombs: 'Here lie the first soldiers of the United States to fall on the soil of France for justice and liberty.' The passerby will stop and uncover his head. The travelers of France, of the Allied countries, of America, the men of heart, who will come to visit our battlefields of Lorraine, will go out of their way to come here to bring to these graves the tribute of their respect and gratefulness. Corporal Gresham, Private Enright, Private Hay, in the name of France I thank you."

A gray day, khaki and French blue, the fresh earth of the graves, and these words that were French and soldierly from a French soldier, while a French battery fired minute guns over the village of Bathlemont at the German trenches! After the address a company of the Sixteenth Infantry fired three volleys over the graves and a trumpeter sounded taps. All the troops marched by at the salute; the General and his staff advanced to the graves and saluted.

It was a very touching ceremony. Our blood had been shed. Ten million able-bodied Americans were now committed as they had not been before to their task. If in the future relations between France and America should ever be endangered, if national

selfishness should ever get the better of reason, let someone remember to mention the graves at Bathlemont. Other Americans were to die as bravely—how many no one could foresee—and the plan was to send their bodies home. But these, the first to fall, will remain.

The casualties that followed were about the usual number for the front that we held for the time we held it; but on the whole the First had more experience of trench life itself than of its dangers in the ensuing gloomy, wet days and long, wet nights. Rain set rivulets to running in the trenches and turned rivulets into torrents, and moist, clinging snow was blown into the faces of the outposts.

In the early period of the war every writer who had the privilege of visiting trenches, a privilege which became more and more common, attempted to make readers see a trench and realize its atmosphere. But by the summer of 1916 the great trench description contest was over, even in the magazines. Future efforts were left to amateurs who, upon seeing a trench and after having read dozens of descriptions, exclaimed: "No one has ever described this!" and set out to write a description of their own which no one would publish.

Trench descriptions were now revived for the American public because Americans were in the line. An American cook presided at the first rolling kitchen you saw as you entered the trenches. It was an American officer who came stooping to receive you by candlelight in his P. C. dug into the hillside. The same slippery old duck boards were there as you made your way along the line, but the

men who pressed their backs against the trench wall to let you pass were Americans. American, too, was that dripping sentry peering out into the rain, and the figures huddled in the little cavity they had made, with a shelter tent for a roof of a machine-gun position, and that "bunch of huskies" who turned their faces up when you put your head into a dugout. They all saluted; they were used to saluting now and "sir" had become second nature. It was they who made any trench-stale American take a new interest in trenches and trench life.

Exposure had not increased the sick report, thanks to the gradual hardening process of the physical régime in anticipation of just such an experience as they were having. They were lean and keen and carrying out their routine satisfactorily according to professional standards, these men who had been callow and untrained when they landed in France.

Back at the artillery positions, which you reached after trying to keep your footing on the slippery hillside and wading in icy water, the men around the gun pit under the camouflage sheet of chicken wire flecked with patches of green cloth, which hid it from observation by aeroplanes, were also from the United States of America. Their eyes were shining with the zest of city men on a hunting trip. Their faces were wet from the rain and the earth around them was wet, but their smiles were dry with American humor.

All that was old to the French gunners in the battery across the road was new to them. Theirs was the spirit of a youngster out squirrel-shooting with his first rifle. Left to their own initiative, they

would have kept a stream of shells in the air with all the prodigality of the small boy who expends his firecrackers before breakfast on the Fourth of July, in order to show " old Henry Boche," as they called him, that they were on the job.

When the third and last group of battalions of infantry had had their turn in the trenches and the artillery came out of the sector at the same time, all hands were asking what was the purpose of the practice attacks on the drill ground if they were to sit opposite the Germans inactive. No one knew the answer better than the Germans, who gave veteran troops from the Eastern front, where they had become slack, three months' intensive training before they could be made wise enough not to be caught napping on the Western front. The graduate of a technical school has not been educated in vain because the first work given him by a railroad is clerical detail or handling a gang of laborers.

" I suppose we'll get some more training now before we go in the line again," said one of the men. He was right. The First settled down for another course of instruction.

XI

THREE MORE DIVISIONS

A provincial French town gradually transformed into an American city—The New England Division arrives—"No Tobac" signs greet soldiers from tobacco-growing Connecticut—Fine troops, the New Englanders—Cape Cod lives neighbor to Brattleboro and Hartford to Penobscot—The Rainbow Division reaches Lorraine—Dishonest cold—Plenty of American food—Baths for the greatest bathers in Europe, our boys—The movies and chewing gum—The incredibly slow mails.

THE town, which was the geographical center of the American Zone of Advance, may seem deserted and unimportant after the war, but perhaps more comfortable and normal with its official world again restricted to the mayor and the local customs official. These two may have the pioneer Franco-American Officers' Club all to themselves, including the baths. According to the chroniclers, it was a solemn occasion when these baths were dedicated. Many of the Americans present were still unacclimatized enough to consider that any expression of their intense emotion would be self-incriminating.

An officer of the Medical Corps who established a laboratory there was the first American settler in the town. Soon afterwards the war correspondents took up their quarters in the local hotel, whose proprietress was warranted in taking them for the advance guard of our army, which laid a typewritten

barrage on the cable office every night after their return from the drill grounds of the First Division. As press censor, I shared with them for six months the pride which is associated with old inhabitants, while we watched a conservative community yield gradually to the processes of Americanization. We saw division and corps headquarters establish themselves and outrank us; the dining-room of the hotel became as hard pressed as a railroad restaurant when an excursion train without a diner stops twenty minutes for dinner; the growing prosperity of the local merchants who had hitherto done only a desultory business, as they had been too far removed from the front for wartime profits; and the transformation of a vacant shop into a branch of a famous New York bank, with regulation American cashiers' windows.

When, one morning, I found the streets swarming with men from Boston I knew that the Twenty-sixth Division (101st, 102nd, 103rd and 104th regiments), which was formed from the National Guard of New England, with Major General Clarence R. Edwards in command, had begun to arrive. The weather was normal for that season of the year. It was raining. Boston looked miserable, not so much on account of the weather as on account of the "No Tobac!" signs in the tobacconists' windows and the want of any money on the part of many of the men with which to buy tobacco if there had been any in town. The signs did not deter them from going inside the shops and peering wistfully into all the little compartments on the counter where cigars and cigarettes are kept and making the gesticulatory

argument of a man expiring for want of a smoke. The tobacconists tried "No Tobacco!" in place of "No Tobac!" in the windows without effect: and then "No Tobacco! No Cigars or Cigarettes!", which was more convincing.

The penniless, with pay two months in arrears and with mouths watering, stared at cans of preserves in shop windows and cracked a joke about saving their wealth to subscribe to the Liberty Loan, as the government needed it to pay its soldiers. Of course, there had been a slip between Washington and a training camp at home and another between a training camp and France, and eventually the paymaster would connect up their descriptive lists with the Treasury Department and their pockets; but, meanwhile, what was the use of being a citizen of the richest country in the world or, particularly, of Connecticut, a tobacco-growing State?

In those days we were not sending divisions across the Atlantic with the facility of dispatching suburban trains from the city in rush hours. A division arrived by detachments and gradually filled up its sector of the training area. The chief of staff of the Twenty-sixth was not grieved that twenty-seven thousand New Englanders did not descend upon him at the same time. He did not need to look at the calendar to learn that winter was coming on. The calls for stoves and firewood were a sufficient reminder; and the mud tracked into his room by officers who came to tell him their woes was only another indication of the truth of the statement that there is never a drought in Lorraine.

He smiled and told them that later on the rain

might change to snow; and when it did everybody agreed that it was just as wet as the rain and no colder. As for the winds that blew when there was no snow or rain, if Boston would only imagine that they were from the East it would be less homesick. How should he know whether things that were missing were in Hoboken or on the sea or why one detachment got the officers' baggage of another detachment! But he was straightening things out as fast as he could. Wood was being cut; stoves were arriving—and remember that we were in a state of war. Why will some men forget that fact when they go to war?

No, the New Englanders, in their moist overcoats with water dripping from the rims of their rumpled campaign hats, did not look like dress parade; only ducks would in the Lorraine weather. Certain critics let it be known that nobody expected much from the National Guard. You could not change its character as long as the officers were friends and neighbors of the men and elected by their votes. Officially the Twenty-sixth was not National Guard. Under the new scheme of things, as directed by the experts in scientific warfare, it was a part of the United States army, in which a division was a division, with no distinction between divisions, and the transfer of personnel between divisions became an established principle for developing homogeneity. But the flavor of locality and the pride of locality endured. These regiments from New England were regiments with Civil War and even Revolutionary traditions.

Something that the Lorraine weather could not

change was the physique under the overcoats. The men were more than the average height, broad-chested and vigorous. Many had been on the Border. The recruits were of equally good material, including the volunteers and about a hundred men from the National Draft who had been jumped into uniforms and hurried on board ship to fill up the ranks of a regiment. Saluting had not yet become a universal habit with them according to accepted requirements in France. General Edwards looked after this with a system of his own.

"You don't salute your superior officer?" he would say as he stopped a man. "Well, your General salutes you in order to show you how to salute," and the man addressed never failed to salute thereafter.

Detachments of the Twenty-sixth kept appearing until all were in. Now General Pershing had two complete divisions. Every New England State was represented in some village in France, as well as all of New England's occupations, from lobster fishers from Maine to factory hands from Rhode Island. Cape Cod lived neighbor to Brattleboro and Hartford to Penobscot.

"Are there many Harvard men among you?" a Harvard man asked a soldier of the Twenty-sixth.

"Some of us are workingmen," the soldier said pithily.

As soon as any lot of newcomers were settled in their billets they did what American soldiers and the Canadians always do. Their restless, nervous energy impels them to movement. They wanted to know where they were and what was doing generally.

What was the château on the hill like? Who lived there? Let's go up and see the old place. Madame la Comtesse looked out of her window to see figures in khaki walking about in her garden. As they were Allies and Americans at that, she did not disturb them. Until discipline restricted their tourist proclivities, you met New Englanders on the road miles from their billets, bound to see the next village. After they had seen that, curiosity called them to the next with a view to ascertaining if all the villages in France were alike. Then discipline had to interfere with such pilgrimages.

The soldiers of French-Canadian origin in the division had everything their own way. After centuries of transplantation they were on the native soil of their ancestors speaking a French that made them the more interesting to the natives in that they had to explain words of a *patois* as old as Elizabethan English, which Joan of Arc would have understood better than the modern Lorrainer, whose language has changed with time more than that of Quebec. They were at home at once as they took the village girls for strolls, leaving English-speaking rivals mere dumb spectators of a triumphant progress. Their readiness to act as interpreters in affairs of business for their comrades excluded affairs of romance. There was talk on the part of the neglected majority of having the French-Canadians formed into a separate unit and sent to the Italian army.

In view of their service on the Border, where they had been under his command, General Pershing had considered that the National Guard divisions should

alternate with regular divisions (expanded by a large percentage of recruits) in the pioneer service in France. If it were fitting that the honor of being the first regular division should go to the First, then, in the name of the Pilgrims who landed at Cape Cod and of the founders of Jamestown, the first National Guard division which was to participate in the Odyssey of America in Europe ought to come from either New England or Virginia.

By the same token, it seemed proper that the next division of former Guardsmen sent to France should represent the whole country. After the confinement of a transport and a train ride in box cars, as new to them as it was to all their predecessors and successors in the flow of troops across the Atlantic, the first lot of the Forty-second (165th, 166th, 167th and 168th regiments), commanded by Major General William A. Mann and, later, by Major General Charles T. Menoher, had their introduction to village billets in the fullness of their first contact with discomforts to which the New Englanders were becoming accustomed. Every American soldier is a novice, a rookie, when he goes to a training camp; again, when he goes on board ship; again, when he arrives in France; again, when he goes into the trenches for the first time. After this he "knows."

No rainbows welcomed the Rainbow Division to its area. Sun is required to make a rainbow. After all that they had heard about "sunny France," what our men saw of France that winter made them ready to believe that there are no nuts in Brazil and no spices in Java. Reports of halcyon summer days in other parts of France only irritated them to

fresh satire. It might be fair weather on the Riviera, but that did not help you any in the mist-ridden and rain-splashed valleys behind the Vosges. On account of their late arrival the Rainbows had particular reasons for losing their faith in all that the guide books said about foreign parts. Their chief of staff had troubles of his own no less pressing than other chiefs of staff.

The Rainbow Division was celebrated. The idea of an all-American division touched the chord of popular sentiment; its name had the appeal of romance, in keeping with the crusade of armed men to a distant land. This was bound to make it think well of itself, which is a good thing for any division if it does not lead to the mistake of accepting reputation as a guarantee of success. Fame did not bring steam heat to the barn lofts where the men slept. Rather, it was something to live up to. The Rainbows must make good because they were the Rainbows; and they did make good.

Meanwhile, the Second Division (9th and 23rd regiments and 5th and 6th Marines), under Major General Omar Bundy, was forming, in addition to the regiment of Marines already in France now being mobilized from its detached service. These four divisions, the First, the Second, the Twenty-sixth and the Forty-second, were to be associated in our minds as a group. All were in the trenches, all had their own artillery ready to act with them long before other divisions, owing to circumstances rather than to any intention of preference.

They formed the nucleus of our first Corps. Our thoughts were centered on them in the early days of

the expedition. Their efficiency was the subject of discussion through the various stages of their progress, while the immense inflow of divisions in the early summer of 1918 made it difficult to remember the names of the new arrivals who needed shorter periods of training in France, thanks to the longer and more up-to-date training which they had received at home before they went into the line in the critical hours of the German offensive of that period. Still another reason for their isolation is the fact that the four passed through the first winter. Nothing that other divisions may do will ever rob them of this distinction, which will make the first service stripe on their sleeves precious to every officer and man.

It was only natural that the heroine of France should come from Lorraine, as a soldier said. Joan was bred in fortitude by the climate. The most loyal Lorrainer will concede that the climate is moist and chill in winter. And he is used to it. He accepts it as the Filipino accepts typhoons and the Arab accepts the desert. It must make vigorous men, as you may work out of doors the year round. There are no such extremes as we have between winter and summer.

The cold of Lorraine was not honest cold, according to our ideas. We think of honest cold as that of the Northern States and Canada, with frost on the windows and snow on the ground. The temperature at which we keep our rooms in winter makes us really a warm-weather people. Steam heat in office, factory, house and trains has become second nature to the inhabitants of our Northern States.

Even our American ancestors who broke the ice in the pitcher for their morning ablutions, as a writer would have said in the language of the day, would have found northern Europe trying. They were used to clear, dry, biting cold; the kind that freezes your ears but not your marrow. That of Lorraine is more like ours than is Flanders cold, with less humidity but enough, when reënforced by the lower mountain temperatures, to prevent a Lorraine house with a few sparks in the fireplace from being any more comfortable than a Flanders house. It made the American body into a sponge which it saturated with icy mist and rain.

Northerners who have gone south in winter and shivered more in the tropical houses than at home, will understand how Alabama, which was supposed to be at a disadvantage, stood this kind of cold as well as Ohio, which looks out from rooms heated to seventy degrees Fahrenheit upon the icy stretches of Lake Erie. Billets which were comfortable to the French soldier could not be comfortable to the American. The idea that war was without hardships in France was a paradox to men who would have preferred sleeping in tents in Alaska, where I have felt the cold less than in France, to sleeping in fireless rooms in France.

Their post-war recollections will picture that winter as something heroic for the pioneer divisions. Even Valley Forge did not become heroic until Monmouth and Yorktown immortalized it. The soldier who had a mansion at home and the one who lived in a tenement missed the same thing—heat. As one soldier said as he climbed into a hayloft for the

night, "I'd like to be a cloth and be wrapped around a steam-pipe until spring."

We must have more heat than the French, and we had it. Our soldiers cut the wood from the forests to make it. It was green, it sizzled, but with a proper draft it would burn. An influx of stoves such as that region of France had never known met the situation successfully. The Adrian barracks were kept cozy; officers in châteaux, where great rooms were heated by a small grate, suffered more than the men who were in barracks. All were in the same boat when we took over billets from the French at the front; and all four divisions were in the line before the winter was over. Then an Adrian barracks, by contrast, seemed a paradise.

The overseas cap came to take the place of the campaign hat. When mothers at home saw pictures of their sons wearing it, they said that their sons did not look like American soldiers, which is another illustration that the unfamiliar thing seems unnatural. Our dignified, long officers' overcoats, soaking up moisture until they were like a clammy shroud, yielded to the short trench coat with its fleece or wool lining and water-proof exterior buttoned up close under the chin.

We learned, too, that the Lorrainers depend upon internal as well as external stoking to keep warm. They eat heartily and plenty of *videments* and do not come to their breakfast with a steam-heat taste in their mouth which calls for grapefruit. Go from a château in France in midwinter to a steam-heated hotel in New York, and if you do not change your diet you will suffer from vertigo. Return to the

château and your shivering flesh requires that you put sweets and fats in your human furnace.

There was never a time when the men lacked plenty of food—American food. The simmer of bacon made sweeter music than the Metropolitan Orchestra. There were canned corned beef hash, great rations of fresh beef as well as canned "willy," and big satisfying loaves of white bread as well as hard bread, and Boston did not go without its baked beans. What a morning for you when you received your first invitation from a mess for a real American breakfast of corn cakes and syrup and fried ham and coffee that was not *café au lait!* French cuisine was all very well, but you did not know how good home things were until you went to war. Such a gorge in that Lorraine climate, with the sauce of appetite, left no envy of people dilly-dallying over a banquet at a Fifth Avenue hotel. French officers invited in for the corn cakes said polite things about them and ate the amount politeness required, wondering more at our dietary régime than our custom of drinking cold water at luncheon and dinner.

In the early days the privilege that you envied your friends at home more than their food was their bathtubs. Other peoples have thought that we must be an unclean people because we bathe so much. Our national insistence upon beginning the day by lying full length in a tub of water is a habit which some of our men thought had become a necessity until they were billeted in a French village. They felt sticky at first, but after a while it seemed quite natural and they had no more apprehension about an early demise from uncleanliness than had had

their great-grandfathers, who considered an "all-over" once a week enough, with lapses even from this schedule when there was a prolonged "cold spell."

One officer said, after an effort with cold water in a cold room, that he was not going to bathe again until he had blue mold on his back. He was out for the non-bathing record in Lorraine. But that was pose. He did not miss a chance for a pilgrimage to the officers' club for a "hot soak," which was a concentration of joy more than equaling the afterglows from fifty regular morning baths, or a shower after you have beaten your deadliest rival at golf. If you had a meal of hot cakes with syrup afterwards,—well, there were compensations in fighting the battle of civilization. When a certain major general made a trip of fifty miles to get a real bath, it was too important an event for his staff to keep it a secret. They knew that he would feel like a lieutenant general when he returned.

Bathhouses were built for the soldiers and they took their turns at a weekly "scraping"; and, as a matter of fact, every town of any size had a public bathhouse. For our national dipsomania in bathing should not be construed as casting reflection upon our allies. When this army returns from France, more Americans than ever before will not feel that they ought to be expelled from their clubs and lodges because they have missed their morning bath. Everything is habit, as travel teaches in the course of making you broad-minded.

The men were healthy in spite of the climate and of those pessimists who drew long faces in the

autumn as they thought of the winter and exclaimed: "We're going to have a lot of sickness!" Ravages of pneumonia and epidemics of spinal meningitis and other diseases which were prophesied did not materialize. There was less sickness than in some of our training camps at home, which does not imply that there were not cases of pneumonia and that there was not influenza which ran its contagious course, along with sore throats calling for the use of the iodine brush by the medicos. Coughs and sneezing ran up and down the line when a company fell in; but the small number of deaths could not be gainsaid. Mothers had worried unnecessarily about their sons; and they would have worried more if the pessimists had been allowed to shout their apprehensions from the housetops.

Not even soldier philosophy and the medico's skill could lengthen the short days or remove the gloom of overcast skies to men far from home, who were children of the sunlight which never deserts our country long even in winter, when its glare is on the snow and ice in the north at the same time that it kisses the white caps of the Sierras, burns on the desert and lays its broad sweep over the Southland. Yet we never think of speaking of "sunny America," except in referring to some part particularly advertised in tourist folders which also call us to "sunny Hawaii" and "the sunny Caribbean."

But there was compensation. The Y. M. C. A. came along with its moving-picture shows including the latest reels from home, though one reel showing people bathing at Palm Beach brought a wry laugh. Its huts sent out beams of welcoming light on dark

nights. Its supplies were arriving regularly, including gum. Children followed the soldiers begging for "goom." We shall set the jaws of Europe to working on great waste of masticatory energy and possibly to eating peanuts in rooting at future French ball games. The bat, the mask and the glove had to be laid aside; but, in order to keep fit, we undertook football and other games that could be played in the cold and the mud.

The worst trial of all was the slowness of the mails. How little the average person knows the meaning of a letter from home to a soldier! His letters from home are all the home he has. They summon home to his imagination in periods of reality which are separated by periods of conjecture, whose anxiety was dependent upon the length of time between letters. The longer the time a letter takes to arrive, the less assuring is the visualization haunted by the words, "I wonder what has happened since it was written!"—happened to those you love, to those whom you worry about though you do not worry about yourself even when you go over the top. I can imagine no more heinous propaganda that could be devised to ruin an army's *morale* than to keep all their letters from the men for a month before they went into battle, or to have them receive belated letters telling of family troubles.

A man would say, triumphantly: "I got a letter from home which has been only three weeks in coming!" and all that day and the next he would be happy with that letter in the pocket of his blouse. Of course, there were letters mailed before it and connecting up with it which had not yet come.

Steamers across the Atlantic were slow. Mail came by transports and passenger steamers of varying speeds and subject to varying delays. The system of unit addresses was difficult of application and organizations were on the move in France as well as en route from home; but all these mitigating circumstances did not change results or wholly explain them, especially when a division had a settled training area.

It was unjust and stupid to place the blame upon that poor postal clerk fresh from the States, who had opened up a post office in a training-camp town. He had to deal with French postal authorities when he spoke no French and to depend upon French trains. His brain ached from contact with unfamiliar difficulties. If he ever got back to his regular postal job in the U. S. A., you could bet your life they wouldn't get him in France again or on any other job which had him started straight for a lunatic asylum! People at home did not write P. O. 903, or Co. A, 3rd Bn., 96th Div., as an address; and postal clerks did not receive letters in California which belonged in New England, and have people complain because letters addressed to Boston from New York were late because they had gone by way of Reno, Nevada. How was he to know that that Signal Corps outfit had left Balincourt, Lorraine, for Ablainville, Brittany?

According to his notion, a set of cards bearing the mail addresses of the units of the American Expeditionary Force were evidently piled on a map of France and then stirred about and then piled again and stirred again, and then shot into bags and sent to the four corners of the compass. He was

"up against it," as he said; as much up against it as if he had been put in charge of the mail delivery of ancient Babylon without any knowledge of hieroglyphics. All he could do was to wait until he was transferred to another place or recalled as the result of complaints; and, meanwhile, he could strive for transport to brings the bags to the office and try to locate the owners of letters when he opened the bag. The things said about the postal service in general, some justifiable and some unjustifiable, were warm enough to make dry spots in the Lorraine weather.

Meanwhile, training proceeded in the damnable weather. All four divisions, instructed by French units, were going through the curriculum of the First Division amended in keeping with later developments in tactics. The short days, the mud, the rain and the snow limited the hours of work. Skirmish lines could not lie long in sodden fields; bombing up practice trenches filled with water had its limitations. But anyhow, if you got ill they sent you to a fine hospital, with American women nurses who talked United States and made you think that you were as important as General Pershing, while you were having a much better time than he was. There was little grumbling, not even from the National Guardsmen who were expected to write passionate letters of complaint home to their congressmen. Our men played the part of men. Through that winter they disproved any idea that our national wealth had made us soft; and in the spring they were to disprove any idea that this generation of Americans has not the courage of its forebears.

XII

PULLING UPSTREAM

The Italian and Russian disasters—The British offensive of 1917—Reasons and disappointments—Thirty per cent superiority of German numbers—Reasons for our three-million-men programme—Difficulties of transportation increased during the winter—Men who triumphed and men who worked their hearts out—Our national energy—The Inter-allied Conference—Faith of our Commander-in-Chief in America's part—The Staff College of the A. E. F.—All desires expressed in the one word, ships.

In the censor's office you might read the detailed press cable sent home about our three battalions in the line and our first prisoner. At Headquarters you might read the brief enemy *communiqués*, picked up from the German wireless by our Signal Corps and typewritten on a sheet of note paper, telling of the sweep of the Austro-German forces into the plain of Lombardy and the taking of more prisoners than the total of the American forces in France. This concerned us no less than it concerned the British and the French, who had been looking us over all summer and wondering what they might expect from us. What? Ask the tonnage expert at Headquarters! Ask the shipbuilders at home! Ask the American people!

"The Italians will hold on the Piave!" we were

saying. This was the thing to say. But holding on the Piave was not winning the war.

There was other news than that from Italy; news from Russia, news from the British front. The campaign of 1917, begun with great expectations of the Anglo-French offensive and continuing in the British offensive and an Italian offensive, had ended in the collapse of Russia, in the bloody stalemate grapple of the British with the Germans on Passchendaele Ridge, and a disaster to the Italian arms.

From that day, just as we had entered the war, when we read in the news dispatches about Russian soldiers refusing to salute their officers and about battalions commanded by committees, it was clear that, unless a miracle happened, the Russian army could not recover its organization for any important offensive action in this war. Any army takes long to build; when demoralization sets in it crumbles rapidly.

Yet against the logic of experience we might try to convince ourselves that Kerensky would become the Napoleon of the Russian revolution, bringing order out of chaos. After he was out, we might hope that the Bolsheviki and the Council of Workmen and Soldiers' delegates would learn in time from bitter experience that only force counted against the German army, and, summoning the defensive spirit in Russian manhood for Russia's defense, would still maintain a force sufficient to hold many German divisions in position on the Eastern front.

The British army, formed and trained to Kitchener's programme of delivering in the third

year of the war a finishing blow to the enemy—which it would have delivered if Russia's enormous man-power had been continuously exerted with anything like its military force of 1914-15—was to fight all summer, after the Germans had checked the French offensive in Champagne, in trying to carry out part of the original Anglo-French offensive plan of 1917. It fought because it must fight; it fought to hold the Germans off Russia in order to give Russia time to recover, if it were in her to do it; fought to retain the Allied initiative in the West; fought to keep German divisions from hampering the Italian offensive, and fought to keep Rumania in line, while it looked to the rainbow's end of a break.

Between attacks, officers and men, reading the reports of our preparation for the mastery of the air and of our recruits training in camps at home, asked the practical soldier question, "How many divisions have the Americans in France? When are they going into the line?" They knew nothing of what statesmen were planning; nothing about all the shipping in the world which a unity of purpose might summon from the scattered service of individual enterprise to war service.

Perhaps it would have been better for the British to have given up Russia and Rumania as lost, and to have held fast without striking when the French army could not spare the men for a united general offensive after its gallant assistance in the Flanders attack of July 31st. But this was not in the character of the British army. No army had ever had the principle that the offensive alone wins more thor-

oughly inculcated by racial and national tradition as well as by training than the British army. All its plans and preparations culminated in this year as the year when, from spring to winter, it should flail the Germans.

It was due to attack and it attacked, applying the bulldog grip in the Ypres salient, that wickedest and bloodiest of battlefields. What followed was the very grinding mill of war over ground where new shell-bursts threshed the earth that had been threshed and mixed with the bones of brave men for over three years. There could be no tactical surprises for the enemy after the beginning of the campaign; there was no room for maneuvering in that small space crowded with men and material and guns, hub to hub; but in the phlegm of their resolution the British kept driving for small gains, and with the stubbornness of their phlegm sought to make protection for holding their gains in the porous soil where to dig a trench is to dig a well. All in that calm, ordered way in keeping with British character, rested battalions moved up to take the place of the survivors of exhausted battalions, over roads familiar for three years to British soldiers, and past the old ruins of villages pounded by fresh bombardments. They were the same British when I saw them in the thick of their effort of 1917 that they were in 1914, 1915 and 1916; stoical and dogged, however bloody the work at hand.

The Ypres salient was a morass of death which was as a magnet drawing German division after German division into the common shambles. As Arnold von Winkelried took the spears to his breast,

the British army received the German reserves, saying, "Bring your German divisions to us! We'll keep them off the Eastern front and the Isonzo no matter what it costs!"

The British attack at Cambrai, which followed, was like so many of the Allied actions in the war—a stroke by one Ally to help out another who was in trouble. Here, necessity forced a coöperation that had never been developed in a common offensive with England unready when Russia was ready, with Italy unready when France was ready and Russia already breaking down when England was ready. While British and French divisions were hurrying to assist the Italians on the Piave, a direct blow on the British front should prevent more German divisions—if that were the German plan—from rushing to Italy to follow up the victory at Caporetto.

Whether the cause was the British counter-blow or the fear to extend himself with a long line of winter communications, at all events the German did not press his advantage. He left the Italians, with the help of British and French reënforcements, occupied in preparing their new defenses and struck back at the British at Cambrai. His *riposte* there was costly for him, but epochal. For the first time since his attack on the Canadians in June, 1916, in the Ypres salient, he had taken the initiative on the Western front. Such was the notice he served on the world as food for its winter thought.

Not content with this, he announced, through his oily, whispering agents in Switzerland, that he was preparing for a great offensive on the Western front;

and this method of promulgation was taken in some quarters to mean that his next objective would be Italy or Salonica. What should be kept secret if not an offensive? Such publicity was a little too obvious to minds priding themselves on their perspicacity in detecting German deception. It was Bismarck who said that if you told the truth no one would believe you, which was an indication that he had no illusions about the world's opinion of himself.

A conversation sometimes crystallizes, in the simplicity of direct phrase, the nature of a situation. One day when I was in the office of a responsible American officer and we were talking of the outlook, he wrote two sets of figures on a pad. On one side were the Allied divisions on the Western front, French, British, Belgian, Portuguese and American; on the other was the number of German divisions then on the Western front and the number which might be spared from the Eastern front. He added up the columns and passed the pad across the table.

"There is something for our people to chew on," he said.

I saw that the Germans had a superiority of thirty per cent.

"It's up to us," he added.

Comb France and England for more man-power and still they could not make up the difference. The next Allied offensive must depend upon American divisions. Meanwhile, before we won the war we must stop the Germans from winning it. Could the Allies hold without large reënforcements from America? It would seem that they ought. Thirty

per cent was not sufficient superiority, even in pitched battle days, to insure a decision. How, then, could it be on a solid front with no room for flanking? But the theory of a stalemate had received a shock at Caporetto, where the Germans had smashed through the Italian line and thrown armies in rout, which had set the cautious, who had had great faith in trench warfare, upon another tangent of thought. The German had the interior line; the advantage, though the general plan of his offensive were known, of concealing the point of concentration where he hoped for a break.

The truth in those figures, if not the figures themselves, was telegraphed to America; but not the full truth of our situation. With the Allies depending upon America, *morale* raised its hand in warning against depressing an Italy still tremulous on the Piave after her great losses, a France which faced the fourth winter of the war, a Rumania isolated but loyal, and whatever elements of organization remained in Russia.

Propaganda was now the ascendant word of the Allied lexicon. We Allies, perhaps, were given to riding one idea hard for a time and then taking up another as the sure means to victory, when the only sure means is all-round military efficiency and hard fighting. The Italian disaster was ascribed to the infiltration of German propaganda into the Italian ranks which had broken Italian *morale*. The same influences might be at work in France. We must not support them with discouraging reports.

It was, indeed, up to us! The million-men, two-million-men, three-million-men project needed no

further justification than the two sums in addition on the pad. Victory had again raised the *morale* of the German army. There was no sign of any uprising among the German people which would obviate the necessity of our bringing over the great army which our Staff in France had prepared to receive.

We were still behind our programme in troop transport. Hoboken had become the byword of our disappointments. It was the symbol for home ports where supplies accumulated, awaiting shipment. The submarine situation might be better, but its toll still exceeded construction. The outline of a ship was burned in the heart and brain of every organizer striving to get on with his work. There might be supplies enough for the men we had in France, but these were only the incidental routine of army existence beside the requirements for construction.

The Italian disaster had its effect upon every village in France, upon every human being, as the result of the new demands upon an economic organization whose balance was delicately held in meeting the needs of the French army and people and our own increasing demands. Italy had lost guns and ammunition and quantities of material of all kinds brought from abroad, which must be replaced from abroad. All traffic must cease on the railroad lines to Italy to leave them open for the passage of British and French divisions; the call for rolling stock for their transport had priority over all other demands.

Where previous lines of communication for these divisions had been short as a part of the system of

supplying the two armies in their settled zones, they must now run across France and halfway across Italy. This rearrangement passed on its effects, altering many plans, delaying their fruition, keeping coal from people's grates, limiting factory outputs and delaying all kinds of shipments. The pressure for the new railroad locomotives from America and for more rolling stock was accordingly the greater. Cargoes arriving from America were still unclassified in many instances; ships with every pound of tonnage space previously taken now arrived not fully laden, sometimes not by twenty or thirty per cent of their capacity.

Partly finished warehouses, piers, railroad yards and structures of all kinds situated at the different points which were to be connected into a system were not yet ready for use. The material for building others was scattered about the sites. Men who looked at their blue prints, measuring results by their ambition and the number of unfilled requisitions which were vital to progress, knew that it was against orders to become discouraged. Then the labor, which was waiting upon material, arrived; or the material that labor awaited, whether tools, corrugated iron, stanchions, cranes, light railway cars, cars, pumps, dredge parts, piles, rails or railway ties or cement, appeared one day as another tribute to the accomplishments of the French railroad system under its heavy strain, manned by old men, often poorly trained, who had taken the place of the younger men who had fallen in action or were in the trenches. To have the next vital part in your operations lying upon a pier at a base port was

far from having it delivered; and priority from a port to the point of delivery in France was no less a trying problem than was priority from interior points in the United States to Atlantic ports where our own railroad system was getting its first experience of war strain.

Engineers in France who had been with the Panama Canal project from the first knew from experience that a stage of reaction would come. Reserve officers with reputations for excellence in some particular line did not always succeed in France. Trained in home conditions, their minds were too fixed for adaptability to different problems in a different environment. Again, when they had adaptability their personal efficiency could not take the place of material and tools, or they broke down from overwork, or were harassed by superiors with minds incapable of expanding to greater responsibilities or of appreciating difficulties and who sought scapegoats for their own inefficiency. The major, who had the ear of a colonel who in turn had the ear of a brigadier general, might sacrifice captains and lieutenants to save himself. With such a concentration of authority as the great project required, the axes of private ambition, in some instances, were bound to be ground at the expense of the whole.

I remember hearing an officer say of a subordinate: "J. does not know anything about his work. The reputation he has made is all bluff. We've got to get another man. I'm going to take hold of the matter in person." The truth was that the speaker did not know anything about the work himself. It was his own directions that made the mis-

take of forcing J. to a system contrary to his own ideas. He now gave orders to J.'s successor to carry out J.'s system, which succeeded to his own credit in the eyes of his superior officer. This gentleman would go on rising until some superior found him out.

Again an officer might have the department that he had built up moving well, when an officer who had the ear of a major general would take it over, leaving the pioneer stranded. This was clever personal politics but hardly good patriotism, and sometimes sacrificed a man who had too fine a sense of service to make his situation known. As a people, we have an inclination not to believe in merit if it is not advertised. But I am speaking of exceptions in order to be discriminate. Other superiors, who had true purpose in keeping with their ability to make plans, delegate authority and rise to responsibility, won the loyalty and devotion of all their subordinates.

Men triumphed and men worked their hearts out; men had their hearts broken; men who worked and worried for sixteen hours a day, in order to prove that they were on the job, lost the sense of firm resolution and decision which the confidence of superiors and Sunday holidays and an occasional golf game kept alive in them at home. But to knock off for a day and walk across the fields was the sign that you were losing your grip, until higher authority intervened and sent men who were on their nerves off for a rest to Nice, which became the resort where tired officers recuperated.

Reorganization, with new orders confusing the

minds of executives, was necessary, but with some superiors it became a habit.

"Good God! Here are some more instructions!" exclaimed a foreman of a project one day. "More instructions telling me how to do things instead of telling me what they want done! If I don't know, what am I here for!"

He continued to carry out each set of new instructions, which only led to more inefficiency until a major general divorced that superior from a field clerk and a typewriter.

It was our national energy—the energy that sought gold in California and Alaska, that built railroad lines and founded cities—driving and battling, hustling and pounding, that saved the day at the same time that, in hectic periods, it defeated its own ends. The very dissatisfaction of men with results was one of the most auspicious signs. Even selfish ambition means application of some sort. A layman visiting the sites of construction work could see how the high lights, the vague forms here, the concrete masses there, were developing in the negative of the project, and his imagination could fill in the picture. If he had no imagination he was a poor American.

There was not an hour of the day when we were allowed to forget our dependence upon the people at home. Sometimes we thought of the effort in America as the effort of some gigantic piston hardly fast to its moorings, walloping about, as it drove through a tiny orifice what seemed only driblets of supplies for us considering our vast requirements. Some of the newspaper dispatches from Washington

and New York indicated to us, in some of our moods, that one idea of the war prevailed in Europe and another in America, where there appeared to be activity in every line except in shipbuilding. The Atlantic seemed a million miles broad to us.

It is trite to say that the Allied countries, fighting for freedom, suffered in their military efforts from the effects of freedom and also from the confidence that victory must be on the side of the just cause. Unhappily, a good many just causes and a good many civilizations have fallen before ruthless military conquerors. The Germans had some reason for their view that we were out of our heads in thinking that the war was going our way. It has taken defeats to bring to the Allied minds essentials which should have been obvious from the first. The Italian disaster aroused us again to the necessity of coöperation and summoned the Inter-allied Conference in Paris, when the United States, which had no national territorial aims to satisfy, might act as a unifying element.

The Supreme War Council at Versailles did not bring unity of command, although it established a permanent body for the coördination of effort. When Russia was still in the war, any practical effort at unity was defeated by that alliance of intrigue between Berlin and Russian court circles, which put all suggestions embodying plans for operations on the Western front at the disposal of the German Staff. With the war restricted to the West, the line from the Adriatic to the North Sea could be considered as one line. It was to take still another serious setback to our arms to establish for the

Allies real unity of command, which Germany had from the start of the war from her Imperial Master. We must wait on our publics, which are our masters.

The thought of the American army driven home at the Inter-allied Conference was ships, ships and more ships to bring troops and supplies. There was no use in bringing the one unless you brought the other. Ships wherever they could be procured, from all the seas of the world! Any ship lying unnecessarily idle in any port, every hour's delay in the turn-around of our transports, was serving the enemy. We would not believe that there were not ships available for our uses.

The one office to which no subordinate must bring any word of pessimism was that of the C.-in-C. He had no patience with the phrase "It can't be done!" or with any statistician who figured out tonnage assets and submarine losses to prove the impossibility of transporting and supplying a great army across the Atlantic. The submarine could and would be conquered. We could build enough ships to bridge the Atlantic for five million men if need be and for artillery and ammunition without limit. The worse the news the firmer he set his faith in the future—if we worked and fought. He believed in his army, in his country and its cause and an unconquerable force. When the Allies began to wonder if our resources would ever materialize in a powerful military force against the enemy, his vigorous, vital personal influence had its effect upon other generals than our own. The ships would be built; the divisions from our training camps would come.

The army in France was making ready to do its part. If the nation would only build the bridge we knew how we should use the men and the material. We were making ready in more than the blue print plans, in more than construction work; making ready to command and organize the millions. The organization of our school system which was to prepare officers to direct our divisions had been going on at the same time as the training of the divisions and the building of docks and yards. Both regular and reserve officers were going to the Staff College of the A. E. F., where instruction was hardly in the liberal arts which have precious little to do with "going over the top." An ex-secretary of war and men prominent in the business world found themselves sitting again at schoolroom desks and taking books and maps home to cram up for the next day's lessons. They were set problems, under veteran French and British officers, in the movement of troops from one billeting area to another or to the front lines, and in their rationing, in sudden emergencies in battle, in how to dispose of artillery fire in battle, in drawing up plans for attacks and counter-attacks.

"Doping the black stripe" it was called; for one day the reserve officer students might wear the black stripe of the General Staff on their arms, if in the post-graduate course on division staffs they kept up their record as pupils. They studied until their brains were rattling machine-gun nests under a combined concentration of gas and high-explosive shells. They vied with one another for good marks in recitations and papers. You heard side remarks about

some major, who was the father of a family at home, being the "white-haired boy" to the school commander. Men who had supposed that all there was in transferring a division from one sector to another was to order it on board a train and then march it to its destination, screwed their brows far into the night over details that would keep that division from being tied into knots. When graduation exercises came there were no commencement balls or parades. The graduates were given their orders where to go, and they went.

Other schools were busy at the same time: the aviation schools turning out aviators, though no planes were arriving; a tank school where there were just enough tanks for practice; signal schools; artillery schools, and corps schools, where an ambitious sergeant might learn everything which he would require to know as an officer of the line; not to mention the pigeon schools, where we were breeding pigeons for messenger service with a rapidity which proved that in this branch, at least, Nature would soon make up the deficiencies due to unpreparedness. We had pigeon fancier officers as well as more and more officers in all kinds of specialties, arriving and being instructed for future usefulness against the arrival of that first million men. Without the million they would be like lawyers who never practiced after admission to the bar.

Our career as an army, all our desires, were expressed in that one word ships, to bring the million and then the millions which we knew were the one convincing argument to the Kaiser. Each newcomer from home was plied with questions about

what they were doing "over there," our "over there" being home. Yet inquiry was not necessary. By some instinct the mood of our people seemed to be in our minds. They were with us, oh, yes! But, how with us? We looked to them for our inspiration, our impulse. They could make the current which would force us to pull hard upstream or the current that ran our way. Private letters about what a community was thinking and doing were a revelation of what might be the state of mind of the nation; and in those winter days we felt that we were pulling upstream.

XIII

THE OTHER "OVER THERE"

Leave to go home—Transformation of a German steamship—The *Leviathan* passes with ten thousand passengers aboard—A different America—An undisciplined people respond to authority—The author discovers a new type of American—The faith of a democracy—The man in Washington who could take time to think—The rush of "helpers" to Washington—An impossible programme attacked with American energy.

YES, the decision was with America. My emotions, when I had word that I was to go home for a brief midwinter trip, were very different from those when I had set out from the front in France on the same journey in 1915 and 1916. The thought of seeing friends and family and my own country, which kindle livelier and more heartfelt anticipations the more I travel, were now incidental to the vital curiosity of any returning member of the A. E. F., who sought through his own observation an answer to the question, "Were we to win the war or not?" which had become supremely personal to all men.

It was enlightening to be on board the transport *Mount Vernon,* formerly the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie.* She had brought four thousand soldiers to France and would bring four thousand more on the next outward voyage. It was good to see the young recruits who formed the crew. Supple and rollick-

ing in their sailor jackets, they had already absorbed the ways of the sea. There were more where they came from in that great country of ours, to man other ships; and there were more reserve officers to stand watch after they were trained by such regular officers as the captain and his first lieutenant.

They gave the *Mount Vernon* as many knots an hour as she had ever made with tourists lounging on her decks in the days when no stretch of the imagination would have conceived that the floating hotel, which sent its lights gleaming over the sea, would become a gliding shadow bearing some of those same tourist Americans to Europe, to fight against the armies of the husband of the same Hohenzollern Princess for whom the ship was named.

Her old German captain and his experienced sailormen would not have thought it possible that their places could have been taken by landlubbers after a few months' training; or that the soldiers of a few months training whom those landlubbers saw safely in France would overwhelm the best German divisions. Such is American adaptability to any new environment, such the different character of the training which makes a soldier and a sailor, that it was difficult to think of the men of the army and the navy as coming from the same class of youth; but any illusions to the contrary passed when the bluejackets of the crew, gathered on the floor of the steamer's great dining-room, greeted the motion picture reels with the same remarks about the romantic comedy guy when he was about to kiss the romantic comedy lady that you heard from a

soldier audience in a village in France. Quietly the navy went about its routine. Unheralded its destroyers swept the seas. The navy is the navy, modest, yet sure of itself and its traditions. But would the country give it enough transports and in time? It took the *Mount Vernon* a month to make a turn-around.

Off Sandy Hook a form that seemed like some gigantic headland, too vast for a ship, loomed out of the coastal winter mist. It was the *Leviathan,* formerly the German *Vaterland,* bound on her first trip across the Atlantic as an American troopship. I know of no sight that could be more pleasing than this to a member of the A. E. F. on board the former *Kronprinzessin Cecilie,* and none more displeasing to German shipping interests. It had taken time to overhaul her, and trial trips were necessary with her repaired engines, before she might be intrusted to ferry ten thousand men across the Atlantic; but there she was, ready for business. Only there were not enough Leviathans. We needed a score.

When I was home from the war in the winter of 1915-16 and again in 1916-17, I had been sensible of the contrast, so often remarked, between darkened London and New York blazing with lights, between Europe in its sacrifice and grief, nerves and muscles taut with prolonged effort, and America in her prosperity seeing the war as some distant and horrible spectacle. What would it be like now after it had been our war for over eight months? Life in the streets seemed much the same except for the presence of men in uniform. But the atmosphere was different, very tangibly different. Display had

passed. Money had lost its influence. Men concealed their enjoyment of the luxuries it provided. The talk about markets had changed to talk about service.

It was not a question of how much income you were earning or what distinction in your profession you were gaining, but what sacrifice you were making, that counted in winning the good opinion of your fellows. The man who had not a government position or was not in "war work" of some kind was as much "out of it" as he would have been in the old days if he had not owned an automobile. A woman who had been worried about the choice of doctors for her ailing pet dog during the critical period of the drive against Verdun, while we were still neutral, now expressed her misery by saying that she seemed perfectly "useless"; and the woman who had told me in 1916 that she had never kept up her interest in anything so long as in this war had a son at a training camp who would keep up her interest for the duration of hostilities. The service stars in the flags in the windows of houses and on the buttons that people wore were a new form of social distinction, which Mrs. Goldstein of Avenue A and Mrs. Bertelli of Rivington Street shared with the hostesses of Fifth Avenue.

"Make it the thing to do" in our democracy and we need no law. It was the thing to do to ride in day coaches and to get along with fewer passenger trains and fewer servants. Though we had been characterized as an undisciplined people we responded to authority. When the Fuel Administrator issued his drastic order closing factories and

offices for five days to save coal, this invasion of the rights of business, which were supposed to be sacred to us, was received with the practical thought: "Garfield did not do this to be mean; he had reasons"—which were the figures that the officer had written on the pad for me driven dagger-edged into Allied conferences and Allied governments.

We had not felt the pinch of war yet and we were not in the war yet, in the European sense. This was not surprising. Should the cotton fields, the prairies, the gardens of the Pacific coast, feel the war as England and France felt it? After that voyage of three thousand miles across the Atlantic, which isolated us from the struggle, I was amazed, in one sense, that we should be taking any part in the war. It was easy to understand how the House of Hohenzollern, by the logic that built its fortunes, could not conceive it possible that we practical Americans, when we were secure on our continent, should offer our blood in earnest for any European cause.

I stood in awe of the woman on a remote Western farm and of the woman in a tenement who were obeying the food rules, and of the sentiment that accepted the National Draft without complaint. Transpose situations and consider Lorraine in France or the county of Dorset in England aroused to help Kansas defend herself from Prussianism!

It was only natural that we should still visualize the resources of our country as man-power which must bring the Germans to terms; and the conviction that the mere fact of our entry into the war would turn the scale of victory still lingered in some minds. We were like all people in wanting to hear

good news. Hadn't that German offensive been over-advertised? Wasn't it German bluff? Weren't the Allied reports about superior German forces on the Western front given out with a view to "throwing a scare into us" and arousing us to sterner efforts? How could the Germans gather such great numbers after they had been fighting for three years and suffering such tremendous losses as had been reported?

If you said that you thought the offensive was coming; that the German Staff, which was not given to quixotic military adventures, was going to try for a military decision; that the wickedest and most powerful military machine on earth could really bring thirty per cent of superiority to bear now that Russia was out of the war, you might be indicted as a pessimist in some quarters, not to mention that your appreciation of German strength might be mistaken for faint-heartedness.

Besides, we could not yet consider Russia out of it. Russia had turned to democracy. Our faith in Russia was that of democracy's loyalty to democracy. We thought of Russia as a body of human beings like ourselves. There would be a period of disorder, but order would come, as a matter of necessary evolution. Russia would find itself. Trotzky with his socialism, defying the German Staff at the Brest-Litovsk Peace Conference, appealed to our sentiment and pleased our sporting instinct, which likes to see the little bow-legged outsider walk in and beat the bully.

If Trotzky's propaganda spread in Germany and the German people rose in their might and over-

threw militarism, wasn't that what we were fighting for? Although Germany's apparent embarrassment by Trotzkyism for a time did not deter the War Department or the A. E. F. in its preparations by one iota, it may have served the purpose of the German Staff in lulling our people with false visions. Our faith in Russia did not die even with Trotzky's surrender to Hoffmann; or even with reports that presented him as a pitiful buffoon, or a shark of cupidity. There was something fine in our faith; which was the faith of democracy in keeping with the principles that had brought us into the war.

If you had come home from the A. E. F. with a mission to arouse people to action you found that everybody you met had the same mission. All who were not in war work, as I have said, were trying to get into war work. If they could not, they urged more action; or they were a little weary of hearing action urged when they were doing their bit.

"You say we aren't awake to the war," said one of my friends. "I've been working on a draft board and worn out my shoe leather going around to volunteer for other things. My wife is making bandages, my daughter is getting Red Cross memberships, my only son is in the army and we're doing all the foodless, fuelless day stunts. What else? Shall I do a clothesless day and get arrested; or stand on the doorstep beating a drum? Don't say coördination to me! I'll coördinate with anybody or anything; only when I do, I'm told that it's not coördination."

The noise of the war machinery was incessant, thunderous, not to mention discordant as the ma-

chinery was new. The only calm place in Washington, where all action centered, was the White House. A glance over the fence across the grounds at the white pillars, as you passed from one bustling office to another, had a quieting effect on an overworked nervous system which resolved faculties into something like orderly concentration. The man in there was apparently looking out of the windows all over the country and all over Europe, and seeing the whole simply in the movement of great forces that must be directed by someone who took time to think. That he of all men could take time to think was the most wonderful thing about Washington in the winter of 1917-18.

Our effort in America, as in France, was in the first period of reaction from the great promise of the early days of our entry into the war. Critics said that we had no programme. Personally, I thought that we had a very good one in the National Draft, in leaving war to the experts, in answering France's call for some kind of troops, in building ships and immense numbers of aeroplanes and in manufacturing great quantities of munitions. How were we carrying out the programme? Probably we had aimed to do too much along too many lines. Organizers had not been able to bring accomplishment up to expectation for this very reason, which was inevitable to the tremendous application of our national energy through governmental channels, when, previously, the average man's most intimate relation with the government had been through the post office, and we had had no experience in our time in a great military organization. Suddenly

we all wanted to go into the government; we all wanted to help the government deal with its great problem. The resultant pressure on those who were trying to direct our energy was something that only administrators who had characteristic national endurance could have borne. Washington was "milling," as the cattlemen say. In France, we had the advantage of not having so many advisers on the side lines who wanted to rush on the field and kick a goal or make a "forward pass."

If you took up a position in a Washington hotel lobby and listened to the knowing whispers of pessimism and the complaints of men who had not been given a chance to show how things should be done, you might be fully convinced that the war was lost unless a lean, upstanding young officer or soldier who had been at one of the training camps happened to appear. He made all middle-aged reserve majors seem superfluous adipose. He was a reminder that at the camps the greatest of all the war industries was proceeding—the making of soldiers. They were being trained according to sound principles. Would they be in France in time? Would there be ships to transport them?

There was much talk of the unprecedented powers which Congress had given to the President, but the real dictator in our country is the people. Theirs is an irresistible, prodigious, terrific power. When nine out of ten Americans think alike on any subject, when from coast to coast they say that a thing must be done, it is done. We were thinking together magnificently, amazingly, in our unity of patriotism and in the desire of every citizen to do

the right thing to win the war; thinking together in the continued pressure that more should be done, complaining and grumbling somewhat, but always working.

We had concentrated upon most of the other items of our programme, including Liberty Loan and Red Cross, but as yet we had not taken up the subject of ships in the committee of the whole of the hundred million. At least fifty per cent of our people had never seen salt water. We were all experts in railroads, but ships had never interested us. If you mentioned ships, critics might say: "Yes, that's another thing—our ship-building programme is going badly. My idea is to get down to war bread at once. When are we going to make any machine guns?"

One day we would take up the subject; and when we did there would be complaints about riveters driving half the customary number of rivets in a day. They would have the edict from the American Czar. A hundred million forefingers would be pointing at them, a hundred million pairs of eyes censoring their efforts, a hundred million voices dinning an urgent chorus in their ears. Yet shipyards were assuming form, while the other parts of the programme were progressing, only results did not yet measure up to the impossible standard of accomplishment which American ambition had set.

The fact was that the national mind was still largely concentrated within our own borders on home preparations. Everyone knew of someone who had the luck to be in France, but our hearts were not in France when those in France were not

yet fighting. Our hearts were in the training camps where our sons were; and our hearts would move to France when our sons moved to France by the million, and suspense waited on the dread word from the War Department when a great battle was being waged and casualty lists in the papers were being scanned, to the exclusion of other news, to see if they carried the name of anyone you knew.

Then Germany would be cured of any illusion that we were not in the war in earnest; then our people would be ready for every sacrifice with their minds concentrated on the front in France, demanding, with a ruthlessness which swept all other interests aside, that all the power of the nation should be directed to the processes of destroying the enemy. Everything was working out in our American way—our prodigious, energetic way. But would it work out in time? Would Hindenburg and Ludendorff be able to win a decision before we could bring our force to bear in France?

XIV

THE SECRETARY COMES

A very important visitor reaches Paris—Our plans become realities—Visit to a great base port—Vast docks and immense warehouses—A ten-thousand-bed hospital—A huge supply depot for the A. E. F.—Cobwebs of American tracks all over France—An immense aviation camp—America transported to France—Thrifty French and cool British wonder at us—Secretary Baker visits the General Staff—And goes into the trenches—Sees young men from Iowa in front of "No Man's Land"—A review that would have thrilled a man of mud.

At six-thirty on a dull morning early in March, a little man in a derby hat and sack coat alighted from a sleeper at the Montparnasse Station in Paris, where he was received by representatives of the French government and the only two officers of our army who were then entitled to wear four stars on their shoulders, Generals Pershing and Bliss. The presence of photographers with their flashlights while reporters pumped questions at him, and the fact that he did not have to hunt for a taxicab but was whisked away in General Pershing's automobile, were further indications that he had more to do with the war than the average traveler who was not in uniform. Being Secretary of War of the United States, he was the most important visitor that we could send to Europe, with the single exception of the President of the United States.

He had long wanted to come and he had long been urged to come. But there was the Atlantic Ocean to consider again. If he were to spend enough time in Europe to be worth the long voyage, it meant that he must be away from his desk in Washington from four to six weeks.

After he had his breakfast he put on the silk hat of democratic officialdom, and set out to pay official calls; and after two days of conference with the War Council at Versailles, and of meeting the leaders with whom as a leader he coöperated, he was to see with his own eyes what this A. E. F., with its insatiable hunger for personnel and supplies, had accomplished.

There was something to show him now without calling on his imagination. The transformation in the projects of the bases and lines of communication during the winter had been marvelous. Blue prints of structures that had been planned eight months ago were pasted on the walls of structures finished. As a motion picture man said, the A. E. F. was at last on a motion picture basis, with subjects which would bring visual conviction on the "movie runs." All the scattered points of our effort had realized tangible results within the last two months. I thought of them connected in one immense photograph made by a camera that had all France in its focus.

Organization, which had begun with potentialities, had more and more to consider rapidly expanding realities. New divisions and subdivisions of administration were required for the decentralization of detail and the centralization of delegated

authority. The General Staff system, which had had such an emergency in view, now weaned the business of the bases and the lines of communication and set it up in a house by itself. There was a hegira of chief of the signal corps, chief quartermaster, chief engineer and surgeon general and all their subordinates and clerks to Tours, which became the headquarters of the new Service of Supply, with its own commanding general in a sub-kingdom responsible for all construction and supply.

As the Secretary had seen our ports on our Atlantic seaboard, and as he had crossed the Atlantic with a convoy of troops landing at a naval base, the next step in a tour which was to follow the soldier and his cartridges to the trenches was a visit to one of the great base ports of the S. O. S. No tourist who ever did Europe in a hurry in the old days ever saw more than he saw in a given time. Tourists used to come—how long ago it seems!—to see cathedrals and art galleries and old cities and historical landmarks, though some, according to reports, missed a few cathedrals because they stopped such a long time on the boulevards. The Secretary was to be shown corrugated iron roofs rising in sight of cathedrals, and barracks, machine shops and sheds neighbors to villages under red roofs with walls softened by the tone of time.

As he alighted from an automobile beyond a city's suburbs by an arm of the sea, the scene of the effort before him might have been the Panama Canal in Stevens' or Goethal's day, or the Croton aqueduct, the Salt Lake cut-off, or any similar project in the course of construction where steam shovels nod to

cranes, cement is being mixed and structural material unloaded from flat cars, and engineer and contractor and labor and machinery are making a monument to man's energy which will serve man. The workers might be in uniform, but they would make no claims to being military. They were as American and working in as American a way as if they were in the middle of the United States.

The only evidence that you were in France was the architecture of the buildings in the distance. Those finished, great cement quays imposed and the unfinished being imposed on the soft bank of the water's edge, with a permanency which might indicate that we expected the war to last a hundred years, were an invitation to France to expand her commerce after the war in order to keep them from remaining idle. Great warehouses and more spur tracks were being built and all the appliances were coming to unload ships, with the labor-saving facility which is our national habit.

In the piles of cargo landed here, as at the other port which he visited, that keen, inquiring, well-poised little man might see materialized the requisitions in the long cablegrams for the monthly routine supplies and other requisitions for building anything from a barrack to a salvage depot. As an officer had said in the early days of the expedition, "Why not ask Washington to read the tariff and free-list schedules and ship everything on both lists, just as a starter?"

At the other port, a flat car was fitted up as a seeing-the-S.-O.-S. car. As it ran out over a spur track across swampy land, workers looked up to

see a man in civilian clothes alternately glancing at a blue print and at his surroundings and exclaimed: "That's Baker and Pershing, too!" which was the personification of a good deal of official authority to them. There were more warehouses to be seen, of course. One where the contract workers were hoisting a girder into position would be finished in a week; the other, with the supports just set in the cement foundations, in two weeks. Both were in an isolated location. Neighbors did not crave their company, as they were to store explosives enough for a great offensive. And there were piers built and piers under way and sites for piers to be pointed out. The Secretary might also look over a ten-thousand-bed hospital under construction, rest camps for arriving soldiers, laborers' barracks and a shop for assembling locomotives, though soon locomotives themselves were to be brought over on ships specially constructed for such little details of transport, and swung onto the trucks from the hold by giant cranes all ready for business.

It was not the intention of his conductors that Mr. Baker should have any time on his trip to go fishing. Every officer with a separate command wanted to take part in the education of a Secretary of War and show him around with a "Watch-our-city-grow" enthusiasm. There were still other ports where, as a gang foreman remarked, we were spending a few millions in making a few improvements necessary to conduct the war in a manner unsatisfactory to the enemy. But two examples sufficed as illustration. It was comprehensible that piers, warehouses and spur tracks characterized base ports

of the A. E. F.; and comprehensible, too, the immensity of the task in building them with material shipped across the Atlantic.

Next on the programme was the great depot at Gièvres in the central plain of France, which was to be the principal larder of the A. E. F. When I had been there seven months before the only sign of progress was a tent so full of blue prints that there seemed no room for the authors of the prints. They talked of a great cold storage plant with all the faith of Joshua in himself after the sun had obeyed his order. The plant was now seventy per cent completed, if you please, with its enormous boilers in place and the piping going into place in the vast building where the meat for our army was to be kept fresh. More spur tracks ran past the doors of the immense acreage of warehouses, and one track went out across country to the site of still another depot. A huge shed was wholly unoccupied except by a few machine guns; it was meant to house thousands as soon as they arrived from America. Another had enough small arms ammunition to perforate the whole German military system if only it would be accommodating enough to expose itself at five hundred yards. Other sheds were crammed with an amount of food supplies which indicated that no American soldier in France need worry about having enough to eat for months to come.

The regulating stations far up the line, and the railheads in the zone of advance, and the motor convoys beyond that, and, finally, the hungry men and guns sent their requisitions to the reserve at Gièvres, which kept up its stock by requisition on the

ports when through runs with consequent economy in handling were not practicable. We were building spur tracks all over France with the facility of a spider spinning webs in a meadow; but the report that we were building a railroad across France was quite untrue. Our mileage was complementary, for local purposes, to the French railroad system, which, with its double and four-track lines, would have been equal to all demands if it had had adequate rolling stock and personnel.

Along the first of the spur tracks which we had built—that from the railroad station at Issoudun—had gone all the material to build the aviation city which the Secretary saw in being. Here, particularly, in view of what I had seen in the previous August, I felt like the old settler who had occupied the shack which was on the site of the new town hall of Boomtown. A city that had its own local newspaper, its Y. M. C. A. club room and its hospital had risen, under systematic official direction, with the rapidity of a mining camp. It was a community by itself, dissociated from the rest of the army, enjoying the aristocratic pride of a feudal heritage despite its newness which is the privilege of all aviation camps, while its interest in the outside world centered in any news about the arrival of the Liberty planes, which meant that more privates would be cadets and more cadets would be lieutenants and more lieutenants would go to the front.

The officer in command was the ruling prince, monarch of all he surveyed on earth and in the air. His instructors were his lords and all the students

of flying, for whom Issoudun existed, were his knights, with the remainder of the five thousand souls housed in the cluster of barracks acting as retainers. All talked flying and lived flying and expressed their ideas in the jargon of flying; and in front of the hangars the planes were marshaled for an exhibition more interesting as a spectacle than warehouses.

It was the aviators' part in the war; the building spur tracks and quays was the equally important part of other men, with the sublime part in heroism, in endurance and in character that of the soldier of the line. For no ace aviator was ever worthier of honor from his country than the young lieutenant who leads his men against a machine-gun nest or the private who springs past the hot barrel of a machine gun over the prostrate body of a comrade to end the gunner's work. All the maneuvers of acrobatic flying for training in combat, followed by flights in formation, were shown, with no malicious intention of giving the Secretary of War and General Pershing cricks in the back of their necks, but as an earnest promise that the personnel was not wanting to make another one of our great conceptions become reality, in the conquest of the air and the battering of the enemy with showers of explosives from the heavens when our aeroplane programme at home should materialize in shipments to France.

The last exhibit of the Service of Supply to the foremost of official visitors was a regulating station. He had missed many machine shops, hospitals, lumber camps, Y. M. C. A. huts, bakeries, laundries, dis-

infecting plants, commissary depots, remount depots, ordnance depots, automobile repair shops, spur tracks and warehouses because he had kept to the main lines of communication, though the spreading tentacles of the S. O. S. were reaching every port of central and southern France as more officers set out to establish new branches in new localities. As a negro stevedore said, "I guess it done open Mistah Bakah's eyes—what we's doing over heah." In future, when cablegrams of requisitions for the S. O. S. came to the Secretary of War's desk he would have visualization of our work in France as his counsellor.

In one sense, what the S. O. S. had done was very wonderful; in another it was a commonplace. We had simply transported America to France; and this made the accomplishment wonderful only as America is wonderful and the Atlantic Ocean is broad. The energy which did our building and carried on our enterprises at home, from New York's subways to the California oil fields, concentrated on a great project and workers from hundreds of industries and all professions brought together in a single organization, meant a revelation to ourselves of the power that was in us as a whole.

The profession that was least needed was the law. All the lawyers who wanted to come to France could not be judge advocates. The task of fitting the right man in the right place had been one of the besetting difficulties of the shaking down process from the start. Such anomalies as a seaman in charge of a mule camp and a man who knew mules acting as quartermaster on a transport in the early days could easily be remedied by a mutual transfer that pleased

both the men and the mules; but the problem of the listing of the occupations of all officers and soldiers from civil life which should furnish groups in every line of human skill to draw upon, though it might seem a matter of clerical detail, was not easy of execution, particularly when the inclination of every man was to do something different from what he was doing at home before he went to war.

A watchful eye had to be kept upon the experts in every branch of construction in the S. O. S. lest their ambition and enthusiasm should lead them to overelaborate building, and lest the American habit of liking to see business increasing should lead chiefs to surround themselves with too much personnel and to the overlapping of the activities of other departments. An expert who had been subject to the supervision of boards of directors having competition, profits and dividends in mind, now, with the nation in its prodigality in time of war at his back, rejoiced in the opportunity of the young architect who gets a *carte blanche* commission from a multimillionaire to build a house. In the pride of craft and country, he wanted to build a machine shop that would last for fifty years. When asked if a shed would not serve as well, his answer was: "We can do double the amount of work with the same amount of personnel by having things up to date." He was the expert; his judgment had to be trusted; though when General Pershing happened around there were enthusiasts who found in him a general manager as obdurate as any other in considering his stockholders, the hundred millions. Thrifty French and cool, observing British wondered

at us at first, and then began to consider if they had not fallen into old-fashioned ruts and had not lessons to learn from us in the application of labor-saving devices.

The tireless workers of the S. O. S. were serving far away from the sound of the guns, with none of the emotional thrills of war to relieve their exacting and monotonous tasks, when they wanted to be at the front no less than other red-blooded men. Your real slacker was not of much use in the S. O. S. or anywhere else. A year had aged many of the reserve officers more than five years would have done at home. The end of the war would find many exhausted in strength, facing, without holiday for recuperation, the problem of again earning a living for their families at their occupations, when the former employer might conclude upon looking them over that their war service had put them "down and out." In their patriotism many sacrificed high pay for low pay and an uncertain future. Others were as well paid as they had ever been and the government had not the best of the bargain in their employment.

To us in the zone of advance, the S. O. S. was some vast mechanism which we took for granted, as the average city dweller takes the machinery of city existence which brings his food or a cab to his door for granted. In other words, the S. O. S. was ready for the million men in the spring of 1918. The shipping situation was better, as you knew by the smile of the tonnage expert at Headquarters, which was no longer a facial mask of optimism, but sprang from his inner being. Through all the com-

ing months, fraught with great events, the supplies continued to come.

It was a swift transformation on a journey of swift transformations which took the Secretary on the same day from a regulating station across the boundary line into the zone of advance, where all thought was of fighting, to make a talk to the student officers of the Staff school. Later, he met all the officers of the G. S. (General Staff), the "brain trust" at Headquarters, and through them and their surroundings he might appreciate the growth of the organization since General Pershing had begun it in the little room in the War Department ten months previously and pay a tribute there, as he had at the Staff school, to the soldier who had worked out the plan and whose leadership had compassed the execution of the plan.

Should the Secretary be taken into the trenches? No one was seeking the responsibility of any such risk to the person of such a high authority. He settled the matter for himself. He was going; and his decision presented the one delicate problem in showing him the army. His intention and the time of his visit and the point that he was to visit must be kept a strict secret, as there were a few thousand gunners in the German army who would have liked nothing better than to have welcomed him with every variety of shells at their disposition.

When he left Headquarters for his trip to the front he was supposed to be going anywhere but to the front. En route, he had an introduction to simulated war in watching a practice attack by troops in training, when, with all the accessories of trench

mortar fire and machine-gun barrage, they took trenches and bombed a strong point in a complete victory over the enemy. Then he was to see how all the motor trucks and the wagon trains and the light railways connected up the trenches with the S. O. S., and for the first time he saw the ruins of Lorraine villages from shell fire, ruins which American troops were now defending. He was to meet that finished old master of war, that great, simple French gentleman, General Castelnau, whose name had been associated with the defense of Lorraine from the days of August, 1914, when his brilliant and thorough tactics held back the German onslaught. Every turn of the trench line, all the hills and valleys, the woods, the brooks and bridges at the front in Lorraine must have been mapped by his long vigil in the mind of the General, who was the grand patron of our first efforts; a kindly, shrewd, wise person.

Now any visit to trenches is subject to the enemy's mood. The officers who came at four-thirty in the morning to the old château where the Secretary had spent the night to conduct him, had reports of a good deal of artillery activity in the sector occupied by the troops from his own State of Ohio, whom he wanted to see in the line. A discussion followed among the officers as to the advisability of taking him forward under the circumstances. Finally, the subject of all their solicitude who had come three thousand miles to see the army, remarked: "Gentlemen, I do not want to risk your lives!" and the way that he spoke and the way that he smiled was not unfamiliar in the War Department where su-

preme authority is not exerted thunderously. That ended the discussion.

A barrier of shell fire prevented his approaching the Ohio sector; so it happened that he went into the Iowa sector, where his visit was like any other visit, except that the division general who conducted him would rather have gone over the top than have had to take the responsibility connected in his mind with the knowledge that " you never know when the enemy may decide on a ' hate ' with his guns." The Secretary prolonged the ordeal by talking to the soldiers and going up to an advanced post and asking questions. He was not a cabinet member at that moment and he was seeing what every other human being who had not been in the trenches before wanted to see, as he trod the duck boards and peered into dugouts and looked over parapets at a mass of barbed wire and considered the amazing business of men from Iowa, their strong, young bodies pressed against the moist walls to let him pass, fighting on European soil.

Not a shell burst near him in the trenches; but he had better luck when he was back in the car and a 105mm. high explosive saluted him at a distance of twenty yards. He was quite grateful to the Germans for the favor, which added the finishing touch of emotion to his tour. In the quiet countryside out of the range of the guns as he alighted to look at a little American cemetery a burial party was approaching, and he witnessed the ceremony of the burial of our soldier dead. A few minutes later, at the doorway of a hospital he saw the ambulances arriving with the wounded brought in in

the course of that day's work of an American division.

His observation of all that we were doing in France was completed when a regiment of the First Division just out of the trenches marched past in the open fields upon a little plateau. This was a scene to thrill a man of mud. General Pershing, looking a keen blade of war, stood at the Secretary's side as they reviewed the crowning product of our effort in France. Through his chief, the General was giving an account of his stewardship to the people at home in those firm and sturdy ranks. There could be no denying victory to the millions who should be formed in the mold of these men. Not one of them seemed to have a superfluous ounce of weight; not one to have a superfluous ounce of equipment. They seemed linked together by their discipline as a single unit of thought and action. They were veterans. The sign of their experience was in their faces and bearing: "You can't show us anything, O Kaiser! We know!"

After their march past, the field officers were assembled to listen to a talk by the Secretary. In his civilian garb, his head bared, this son of a doctor in Martinsburg, Pa., who had been Mayor of Cleveland before he became responsible for our greatest war effort, seemed to express our democracy and also the thought that as the agent of democracy he gave experts authority to make a real army; and the officers, ruddy from exposure, looking a little grim under their severe steel helmets, ramrods at attention, eyes ahead, seemed to express the power that was in that democracy if it set its mind on war as

a righteous duty under wise, disciplined direction. After his talk he expressed his desire to meet each one; and shook each one by the hand and asked his name—in keeping with a gift for doing the right thing gracefully which comes to Americans who are jumped from mayoralties to directing war machinery. After this everybody unbent and generals and lieutenants were good-natured, chatty Americans again.

With many pictures crowding for place in these pages, this one, of the pioneers of our forces now trained for any emergency, had the significance of association with the end of the first phase of a history of the A. E. F. We were coming to the second phase, action, when such men as these who had marched past were to give the proof of the mettle of our manhood and of the faith that was in us.

XV

EVERYDAY FIGHTING

The New England Division goes to a violent sector, the Chemin des Dames—Our boys from New England repulse a big German raid with the rifle—A successful raid by the Twenty-sixth Division, the first of the National Guard in the trenches—The Rainbow Division goes to the front—The old Sixty-ninth a thorn in the flesh to the Germans—The New England troops long in front of Saint Mihiel—Creating an American world in France and in the trenches—The "Buffalo," "Chicago" and "Oskaloosa" trenches, etc.—Our troops getting into the routine of war—With spring comes baseball and optimism.

THE emotions of either the Twenty-sixth, the Forty-second or the Second Division, when it was introduced into the trenches, were much the same as those of the First Division, which I have described. Although as fighting the experience now seems tame fundamentals to the veterans who have helped drive the enemy back from the Marne salient, the mid-winter hardships which they endured will keep it ever vivid in their recollection as a hardening process that fortified them for stirring action later on.

It was for the French to choose where each division should be inducted into the line and to repeat, in each instance, with the thoroughness of their Staff curriculum, their painstaking tutorship. Four years of war had taught the French Staff that even where veteran French divisions were concerned, there must never be any relaxation in the detailed care of

making reliefs, which, as I have noted, became impressively circumspect when the American infant was to be led up to the parapet to look out over No Man's Land for the first time.

The Twenty-sixth was particularly an object of paternal solicitude, as it was not to be taken into a sector of the Lorraine front, but into that of the Chemin des Dames in Champagne, which had become a synonym for violence during Nivelle's offensive and later in the fierce German counter-attacks through the spring of 1917. If, for the time being, it had quieted down, there was no reason to suppose that it had permanently changed its character. A German attack was far more likely here than in Lorraine, which required that the French should keep our young ambition well in hand, lest it "start something." The Twenty-sixth was former National Guard, too, and the first territorial organization to go into the trenches. For this reason, it might require more watching than the First, which was regular.

Our New Englanders, very sensitively conscious of all warnings, determined to behave most discreetly and put on their gas masks at every "alert" and keep a sharp lookout for German tricks over the sea of shell craters in No Man's Land, without shooting away their ammunition at imaginary objects. But they had an itching for action which was not altogether due to the parasites of the dugouts which at once took bodily hold; and they were getting well used to trench rats when something happened.

The Germans attempted a big raid. Well, what

had General Pershing said about the rifle? The New Englanders used it with effect; and when they were through they and their trench comrades had completely repulsed the Germans. This was the great historical event for the Twenty-sixth, until the French took some of them for something more thrilling than creeping out at night over the shell craters in a patrol to feel of the enemy's barbed wire, which had been thrilling enough at first. For we are an impatient, ambitious people. We want to go on to new sensations. The raid was not strictly an American one; our detachments went along with the French, and of course our instructors were worried lest it should not be a success, for our sake. It was a perfect success, with no American casualties. Twenty-two prisoners, including two officers, were brought in. Tell that to Back Bay and Penobscot! The French Staff gave the lieutenants who participated a dinner in honor of their achievement. Brigadiers who led charges six months later were not so honored—everything being relative, as the philosopher says.

And do not forget the guns. For the first time the Twenty-sixth's artillery had covered an attack in practice by their own men. "The artillery worked well," said the official reports. Such little tributes count when you are in the line for the first time after months of training. The wise men at American Headquarters were saying that, in view of the way the Twenty-sixth repulsed other raids and of the way that lieutenant stayed out in the shell hole and kept his head when the Germans laid down a barrage, and in view of the conduct of the Twenty-

sixth in general, it might prove to be as good a division as the First, while the Forty-second would have to work hard if it were to live up to the standard the Twenty-sixth had set.

"What did they think?" said a down-easter from Maine—"that we would run away at the sight of them Bushes, that we didn't have brains enough to learn the rules; that we'd melt in the rain? Why, Gosh Almighty, we're growed up and got beards on our chins."

The Twenty-sixth had misery enough in that sector to entitle it to its share of the *Croix de Guerres* which were awarded for its exploits, and after a month of the Chemin des Dames it thought that it deserved a rest, which it would have received if it had not happened that the First was now taken out of the Toul sector and the Twenty-sixth was sent to take its place. It was hard luck, as the Twenty-sixth was sure that where it belonged was in face of the German offensive as soon as it had washed its face and had a nap.

The Forty-second had heard all the praise of the Twenty-sixth with the serene consciousness that the Twenty-sixth was undoubtedly a very good division as it was from the United States; but it was provincial, while there was only one Forty-second which was none other than the Rainbow Division. When you have a regiment from New York City, mostly Irish-American, and one from Alabama, with the other two from Iowa and Ohio, and artillery from Illinois and machine gunners from Georgia, all in one fold, a staff which shepherds the whole in team play need not excite the spirit of competition. As

to which was the best regiment of the four, do not ask the division staff, which thought that all belonged to the best division. But a member of the Ohio regiment would give you an answer gladly without waiting a second for consideration; and so would a member of the Iowa, the New York, or the Alabama regiments.

The question of whether the chaplain of the New York or of the Alabama regiment was the more militant is not for an outsider to decide. They do say that when the Alabama chaplain talked to the men before their big raid in order to incite them to action worthy of the regiment's traditions in the Civil War, he used a swear-word or two. The colonel, whose evidence we must accept as purely official, insists that as the words are to be found in the gospel and were used purely in the line of duty, they were free from any of the associations of profanity which would have characterized them if they had been used by a private when he was chasing a German along a trench.

Going into the quiet Lunéville sector, the Forty-second had more freedom of action than the Twenty-sixth had had; in fact it soon had the sector under its own command. The sector did not remain quiet, because the Forty-second did not see any reason why the Germans should continue in control of No Man's Land. The Forty-second was in France to make war and it made war by starting raids immediately. If the Germans interfered by machine-gun fire—why, charge the machine guns! Prisoners were wanted for identification and the Forty-second took prisoners, rounding up German patrols in the night

and generally breaking up the tranquil existence of that part of the line. Raids became almost as popular as going for the mail to a country post office. Everybody must have part in one, and when a raid carried through to the second German line without finding any Germans there was severe disappointment, as in order to fight you must have someone to fight against. Individual tacticians, talking the matter over in the trenches, said that if they were only given a chance for a big attack they would make trouble enough to force Hindenburg to bring over some of the divisions concentrated for his offensive in the West in order to restore a broken line in Lorraine.

"They're telling us that when we're out in front and we're attacked to fall back on points of resistance," said a New York Irishman. "Orders is orders, but to my mind that's only another word for retreating and I don't believe in it. Now ye take mesilf, and you, Mike Cooney—ye know ye're spoiling for a fight though ye're smiling like an angel—and you, Pete Noonan, and you, Schmidt—you're a good man though you're a Dutchman—and two or three others I could name and give us an extra bandolier of cartridges apiece and some of them guinea footballs (hand grenades) and let the Bushes come! 'Twould be a fine party. I see your eyes glistening, Mike Cooney, at the thought of it. Sure, we'd be thinking we was digging the New York subway when we was burying the dead Bushes the next day."

Our artillery did not lack practice, particularly on that occasion when we prepared for a raid so thor-

oughly that only a torn German coat was found on the position when the infantry arrived. For every shell the German sent we sent two shells in return. This was characteristic of the whole system of the Rainbows. They were out for mastery over the enemy at every point, which indicates, through the medium of the Rainbows, that when we do go to war we do not think in defensive terms.

"I reckon folks will learn, seh, that we ain't scairt of the Hun," as a man from Georgia mountains said.

Such was the Rainbows' record that the wise men at Headquarters were saying that it was a question if the Forty-second would not prove itself just as good as the First—though the wise men did not want any division to run away with the notion that it did not have a lot to learn yet.

The Forty-second was marching back to its rest area when the German offensive of March 21st required that it retrace its steps to the trenches, where it remained for another three months, thus relieving French divisions for other work, before it had its turn in the big battle. Of course, the skillful, businesslike Second, which was regular and Marine, must also be considered and very decidedly in Headquarters' discrimination about excellence. The sector where it was to have its baptism of fire was just east of Verdun and associated with the River Meuse, which shares fame with the Marne in the war, while the character of the sector placed the Second strictly under French command, its units interspersed among the French. There was no need of stirring up enemy activity here. The German was always on his mettle

as if that were the very inheritance of the region. The Second knew what it meant to suffer the drain of casualties from persistent shell fire upon roads and trenches; and it learned to expect raids any night, and that every precaution against gas was worth while, and that you had to restrain your ardor under French command.

On April 14th the Germans made a raid which was very much in earnest. At Maisey two companies were in a position which the French had thought of abandoning because of its bad tactical situation. The enemy took all possible care to give the Americans a taste of Class A, Prussian warfare. Their forces were one company of storm troops and two other companies, which advanced under the cover of a box barrage after a heavy bombardment of the rear area. When the barrage lifted, our men came out of their dugouts in the darkness at 12:30 in the morning to see indistinct figures in their trenches in French uniform, one of whom cried "Gas!" The Americans discovered the ruse just as they started to put on their masks. At the cry of "Boche!" the fight began with the ferocity of such affairs at close quarters, every man concerned with some shadow in the darkness. Plain language was used and plainer methods of controversy.

Meanwhile, in the obscurity of the night, the storm troops had penetrated the sub-sector and started back with a few prisoners whom they had "breached," including a doctor who was spending a night at the front as an experience which, as it happened, he had in full. In crossing No Man's Land some of the prisoners concluded to take a

chance against an enforced holiday in a German prison camp. One American knocked down his captor, seized his rifle, and after bayoneting him, found the way back to our trenches. There was a "milling" of shadows in the gloom, with the result that other Americans escaped. The German intelligence service, which was seeking information about the character of the American soldiers, might make interesting notes the next day. When casualties were counted the Americans had the best of the bargain, which was not as it should be in the Ludendorff lexicon, considering that the Germans had used a company of "storm troops" against a "Yankee mob"; and our companies were cross because it was time to be relieved and they were not allowed to make a counter-attack.

But we were not boasting, as this was strictly against the rules. We were a modest, young, learning army, always bearing in mind when the French said nice things that they were a polite people; and when they intimated what a lot we had to learn we made it our business to learn it, or the wise men at Headquarters would no longer be hinting that your division might become the best in the army. Yet we were pleased at the thought that to date in our dealings with the Germans the balance had been in our favor. As a matter of cool, professional fact, Major General Bundy had a right to be proud of the Second, and Major General Robert L. Bullard, who had succeeded Major General Sibert in command, proud of the First, which had been two months in the Toul sector.

Holding the Toul sector was not an agreeable

business. It was like sitting at the foot of the stairs and having a fellow at the top throw rocks at you from behind a curtain. The advantage is all with him if he has a nasty disposition. Resting on the trench fortress the French line here occupies one side of that famous Saint Mihiel salient, which on the map looks an anomaly that ought to be squeezed out of existence by pressure from both sides. After their "nibbling" to this end in 1915, the French, who had punished the Germans in a period of merciless artillery fire, were satisfied to rest on a stalemate in this region. The Germans occupied a line of hills which made their retention of the salient practicable.

Will any American who has ever served in the Toul sector forget Mont Sec, grimly, contemptuously staring down at him? The very name, Dry Mountain, was an exasperation to men trying to maintain trenches in swampy land. At least, the First made the Germans uncomfortable in an era of raids and artillery pounding, which established a mastery in the detail of trench combat as an example for other American divisions, which were always taking notes from its experience.

"What I would like to do," said a soldier, who came out of the trenches with only his eyeballs unencrusted with mud, "is to have about five thousand long-range guns with five hundred million rounds of ammunition, and then I'd like to sit back in a sunny place, lapping up an ice cream soda—oh, go on! Did you hear me say it? Ice cream, Buddy!—and shoot up that whole outfit all night and all day for a few weeks."

The First and the Twenty-sixth, which also had

long service in face of Mont Sec, would have almost preferred taking Mont Sec to taking Berlin. Mont Sec was to become a personal matter to tens of thousands of American soldiers. At least, they would like to have possessed part of it in order that the fighting might start fair. They would have charged up its slopes gladly if such rashness were permitted by the personages of the Staff who ride about in automobiles looking over personnel and ground and sit up late at night over maps and reports. If there were anything to make soldiers want to go into a real charge in utter abandon in the big battle, which must be fair fighting, it was the First's experience under Mont Sec for two months. Mont Sec was a leash to make dogs of war chafe.

I have already referred to how, wherever we went in France, we began making an American world; not from any absence of appreciation of French hospitality, but in the natural course of doing things according to our habits and customs and in the very enthusiasm of our national youth. There may not be any American race except the Red Indian, but a few years after a young immigrant arrives in America, although he would not be assimilated if he crossed the border into another country in Europe, he is as inherently an American as a Frenchman is French. We had created an American world at our bases, depots and along our lines of communication; in the area where our divisions trained; and now we had one at the front, which completed the stretch from sea to No Man's Land. If that at the front had not the structural background of our

building in the S. O. S., it was, in another sense, more effectively American as you entered an area where every human being was an American and an American fighting man.

We were no longer novices in trench routine. Our battalions relieved one another in the front line with professional facility. At first, we may have exposed ourselves unnecessarily; but that is better than too much timidity. A soldier who is too fearful that he may be hurt at the outset of his service in the trenches will be very badly hurt in the end. Our men when off duty in the trenches could sleep in dugouts under shell fire with the best of the French veterans. Two or three experiences which led to too many unnecessary casualties from gassing cured a whole division in each instance of carelessness. Among the other firsts of the First was the taking over of a divisional sector under direction of an American divisional staff. This was one of the milestones of our military progress; another had been the formation of our first Army Corps Staff under Major General Hunter Liggett, whose direction of our pioneer divisions in an actual corps sector was delayed by their dispatch to Picardy.

Nowhere in the A. E. F., then, had the transformation in February and March been more remarkable than in the combat zone; here the negative had developed in a complete picture, as it must for each sector we held before we took over another. I have also mentioned that when Americans were the protagonists the commonplaces of war became interesting to the American. Thus, my first glimpse of the Toul sector, when it was our very

own, gave to every detail, familiar through four years of observation, an appeal as fresh as all I saw in following up the French army in its pursuit of the Germans from the Marne in 1914. It was our world of command there at division headquarters. Our officers, no longer students under French direction, with maps of tactical dispositions which they themselves had made on the wall, were doing business with the confident manner of old hands, arranging for patrols and raids, receiving reports and dispatching orders, telephoning to brigade and corps headquarters, keeping account of ammunition and transport, controlling retaliatory and interdictory shell fire, keeping in touch with batteries and battalion P. C.'s night and day, ready for any emergency, and talking at mess of their work in the enthusiasm of the junior partner in the Allied concern which has set up a branch house responsible for the trade in a certain district. We had learned the technique from our instructors and were still learning, but we were going ahead in our own way.

It was our world, too, in the villages under our own majors at the rear, where our battalions out of the trenches rested beyond the range of habitual shell fire but subject to bombing from the German planes on occasion; our world, too, at the ammunition dumps and supply depots and railheads and where columns of motor trucks stood at rest or were in movement; our world forward toward the sound of the guns, where a military policeman took care to warn you of your mistake if you had not obeyed the wayside sign to put your gas respirator at the "alert" and where cellars under the ruins of a vil-

lage were reënforced for protection against shell fire for a regimental or a battalion commander's dugout or for housing troops in support; our world in the zone, beyond the automobile limit, where the roads were empty by day and the land lifeless to view except for a dispatch rider or one or two moving figures suggestive of stray travelers in the desert, and where, if no guns happened to be firing, the rattle of a machine gun might break the silence as abruptly as the pecking of a woodpecker in a silent wood; our world where batteries were hidden under their camouflage and gunners lounged about ready for orders to fire or orders to take cover in their dugouts under a sudden concentration of fire; our world where signboards indicated the Buffalo or the Chicago or the Oskaloosa trench; our world out in the outpost trenches in a swamp where men stood in water to their hips or stood on dry duck boards; our world out in isolated machine-gun positions in support, where two men waited and watched, never taking their eyes off a certain sector which they might have to sweep with their fire; our world, where you heard practical talk about minor tactics and dream talk about grand strategy from young lieutenants, while they served you corned beef hash and canned corn and American crackers and shot a stream from the tinned cow into your coffee cup—which is not any conscious attempt to make a long sentence in tying a number of impressions together in order that parents at home may see what their sons are doing in an American sector. We were getting used to war; settling down to its orderly processes.

At nightfall, the engineers took their picks and shovels and their lives in their hands and went out to their digging or to lay barbed wire with that conscientious effort to avoid noise which the consequences of a burst of shell fire teaches. Drivers of supply and ammunition wagons had learned to be owls who slept by day and labored by night, as they moved along the roads not knowing what minute a scream and a crack and a circle of light from a shell might put a wagon out of business. Everybody concerned now had enough sense, when he heard the scream of a big shell or when the first shrapnel broke in his vicinity, to disregard curiosity and seek the nearest protection.

Hot meals in the "marmites" were carried from the rolling kitchens to the men in the front line with punctual regularity. Relieving battalions went up with the steady tramp of strength renewed to take the place of tired men, whose steps scraped a little on the road as they returned to have their old clothes put through the disinfecting machine that kills the "cooties," and to know the joy of clean underclothes against clean skin, and, after a sleep, to go over to the "Y" and see the movies and write letters and read the "Stars and Stripes" and rest until they were sent back to the line.

"Deloused and Y. M. C. A.'ed," we called the process.

The "Y," too, had settled down to its stride, and the Red Cross had made Toul an important base of its activities. Practice had shown the auxiliaries who were real workers and who were not in their part as adjunct to that of the gallant army hospital corps

men, who brought the litters with wounded back from under fire to stations where the ambulances took them to the hospitals. Doctors were also becoming accustomed to the daily casualty lists, which might be suddenly increased when some action out of the ordinary routine occurred. Everything was being done with a thoroughness in keeping with all our training and plans.

A new jargon was spoken in the old haunts of that of the *poilu* which has been so confounding to the purists of the French academy. A fight was a "party." "We smeared" the enemy with our artillery fire. We "shot up the whole works" and "put one over" on the enemy "right on the bean," and we admitted the fact when he made a "hot comeback" at us. Nobody wanted to be called "Sammy" or "Buddy" in the newspapers. "Yanks" was more acceptable; and in any event every private was a "boy." "Fanned!" exclaimed a soldier when a bullet struck against the parados of a trench within an inch of his ear. "Attaboy!" greeted a patrol returning with prisoners. "You're pinched!" greeted German prisoners breached from a dugout. "Game called on account of rain," remarked a soldier when our guns laid down a barrage that stopped a German raid.

When spring came in the Woevre and in Lorraine with a premature burst—which was followed by a relapse—our spirits rose with the sap in the trees. There was really sun in sunny France, its vitalizing glow drying the trenches and inviting men out of doors under soft, blue skies. This meant marble time at home for "kid" brothers, while big brothers

in France brought out mitts, balls and bats and laid out diamonds on the outskirts of the villages. The lengthening days gave pitchers time to try out their curves in the streets in front of their billets after supper with a view to future games for the honor of their units. Men who had fallen out of the habit of baseball at home found it an added relief from homesickness.

Bare fields were showing green, the woods, from skeleton trunks and limbs, were transformed into soft masses of green and the trees along the roads and the canals and rivers shook out their parasols of green. Women and old men were digging in the gardens. The landscape of France was smiling under the sun of France. It took more than a German offensive to restrain American optimism when summer was at hand, when our army was coming into its own and when we hardly required reports from home to assure us that the heart of our people was now in France. This seemed to come to us in telepathic wave forces from the gathering force in the other " over there " which was the best cure of all for homesickness. We were no longer pulling upstream.

XVI

ALL WE HAVE

The great German offensive of March 21st—Superiority of German interior lines and man-power—A thousand Germans to one Briton at critical points—No "limited objective" offensive—A great but not a complete success—Pitiable procession of refugees—Bulldog British and fiery French give way but won't yield—What America did to stem the tide—Foch and unity of command—General Pershing offers the American army to Marshal Foch—The bridge of ships.

THE German army was now to take a hand in the Secretary's visit and relate it to a great crisis and great decisions. He had reviewed the First Division on the afternoon of March 20th. On the morning of March 21st, when he arrived at French headquarters with General Pershing to confer with General Pétain, the thunders of the artillery of the German offensive were audible. Concentration of shell fire along the proposed route interfered with his plan of going over the old battlefields of the Somme on his way to British headquarters, where the evening found the news still vague; but in England, where he later spent two days in conference with leaders, there was no lack of definiteness in the brief and merciless bulletins which showed the German battle line advancing. Not since it learned the truth of the retreat from Mons, with von Kluck's

army approaching Paris, had London had such a gloomy Sunday.

Ludendorff had kept his promise of a mighty blow, though not in Lorraine which he had advertised as the location with a view to drawing French reserves to the East. Prepared to attack in either Champagne or Picardy, he could swing his reserves right or left toward either sector along very short interior lines. Though the British and French Staffs had considered the offensive imminent and thought that it would be in Picardy, they were at the tactical disadvantage of not knowing the exact point where its greatest weight would be brought to bear.

The Germans had planned such a sudden, terrific, irresistible thrust as they had made at Caporetto. They reasoned that the French army was already exhausted. Crush the British army back upon its bases, separate it from the French army and then the French would be at their mercy. America could put no considerable force into action until the most stupendous and daring military conception of the war should have been accomplished. If report be true, Ludendorff had given his word to the Kaiser that he would win peace by imposing his will upon the enemy. His confidence in himself was complete. His superiority in man-power over his adversaries was to be translated into a hundred and two hundred per cent along the front of action, into five hundred and a thousand at critical points. He relied upon more than strategic plan and the adaptation of tactical dispositions to gain his object; upon that industry in preparation of detail which leaves out nothing that prevision can foresee and application accom-

plish; upon such masses of artillery as had never before been brought together with its power unrevealed by the ordinary method of registration.

The troops which he had trained with a sinister thoroughness for their task, and blooded to their task with the confidence born of past successes on the Eastern front and of a promise of their repetition on the Western front, knew that the winning of their goal meant that Germany was master of Europe. They might then choose their place in the sun; and lay an indemnity on France which should make her the servant of German power.

Fresh from their long rests, the chosen attack divisions were not to be bound by the traditions of "limited-objective" offensives on the Western front. Instead of advancing to a given line and then settling down to organize it under shell fire, they were to sweep through the front line and support trenches to the capture of the guns and keep on, throwing division staffs into confusion and breaking up organizations, as they dragged forward their trench mortars and machine guns, all according to their rehearsed procedure to win a great victory by superior maneuvering in concentrating masses in a new war of movement. The fiercest impact would be at the junction of the British and French armies to take advantage of lack of coöperation in summoning prompt defense.

In part, this plan succeeded, for several reasons. Earlier in the year the British had taken over a part of the line from the French, thus weakening their density. The strength of the attack was beyond Allied expectations. We were too firmly established

in our confidence in the defensive power of the trench system. We lacked an adequate second line of defense where we could rally our forces. Yet Ludendorff did not actomplish his ultimate purpose. His failure was partly due to German ignorance of French and British character. The Anglo-French armies began effectual resistance just at the time, when, according to the German book, they ought to have been in full rout. Though the Allies had committed their share of blunders in this war, one of the chief German blunders had been in relying at the wrong time upon Allied blunders.

But the result was harrowing enough for one who had seen the British and French in the Somme battle. Biaches, Thiepval, Pozières and other points which had been won by the hammering processes of siege tactics had passed into German hands within a week. For the first time, since 1914, refugees were again on the roads. Many of them were making their second flight. They had returned to the ruins of their homes after the German retreat to the Hindenburg line and begun repairing their fortunes. They had done their fall plowing in 1917 and their spring planting in 1918, thinking themselves secure until suddenly the storm broke in the distance and came crashing forward. With what they could carry they again set out; the well-to-do farmers with their household goods piled on their carts drawn by their sleek Percherons, and boys and girls driving cows; the townspeople pushing baby carriages piled with their treasures, and old men and old women under heavy burdens and little children plodding along beside them, some in their best black clothes and bon-

nets and hats—which was the easiest way to carry them—as if they were going to church; and gray-haired farmers with shirts and trousers earthstained and schoolboys in their smocks with their books under arms. All they held dear, all they had rebuilt, the promise of their crops and gardens and their labor lost—all except the thing in their blood, their hearts, their souls that made them French. The German *communiqués* took pains to mention too, where the Germans had gained ground not fought over before which turned people out of homes never before under fire.

"I'm used to it," said a peasant woman, who was making her second flight, to one who was making her first. "There is no use of complaining, my dear. Never mind if you have no relatives in the back country, you'll find friends there who will share their homes. It's only prosperity that makes people unkind. Adversity makes them kind." Our Red Cross, which exists for such work as this, and had the funds to carry out such work, had its opportunity.

Emotion was fluid, destiny playing toss with death, horror was young again as in 1914; and the wells of pity which had gone dry were filled to overflowing again. Minds set into molds that had been taking war as normal existence could respond as they had not for three years to the sight of suffering. The monster was out of his trench lair, on the move, and the uncertainty was as taut and inexpressible as in the first battle of the Marne—which was good news for the Kaiser. The most High of Hohenzollerns had Himself taken this battle under

His patronage. He had won a great victory; great numbers of prisoners, great quantities of material. We had taken another lesson from the German masters of war, which was reaction to war in the open; but in return, one day on the Marne where Joffre gave the Germans a lesson, Americans were to aid General Foch in giving them another.

After the fearful experiences of the British Fifth Army, the British soldier inhibited to trench warfare with little experience in open warfare, was somewhat in the frame of mind of a man caught abroad naked. He might be dazed, but he was not panic-stricken as he trudged along in retreat with all his equipment on his back. Reform him into an organization and he would give the same stubborn account of himself as on former occasions. This was his nature. It could not be changed by Ludendorff in order that the Kaiser might make a theatric speech in a Channel port as he looked across at hated England.

The French soldier, thrifty in the trenches, and calculating at the sight of the refugees and of his comrades in flight, responded with all the fiery spirit he had shown on the Marne. Although Ludendorff, with his interior lines, had his reserves at the hub of the wheel and might run them down a spoke while we had to move around the rim to meet his concentrations, the French divisions and the French cavalry, too, were on time as the French have a faculty of being. Civilization took a full breath again when the Germans were stopped and a new line was drawn on the map within nine miles of Amiens.

All illusions were over in any man's mind at the

sight of the refugees. As they touched the heart of the observer it was hoped that they would touch the heart of all America. Germany stood revealed as having no peace to offer except on the terms pledged in the ambitions of an offensive of which, as we were assured, we had seen only the first move. Dreamers, who had had faith in a democratic movement rising within Germany while Ludendorff massed his divisions and guns, might now realize that all German classes were as thoroughly corrupted by the prize of profit by conquest held out by the German Staff as any crew of pirates that ever took to the seas.

Germany was as war mad as in the days when her troops swung through Belgium, leaving a trail of destruction behind them. Nothing could unsaddle the men who rode her war horses, except the thrust of steel. Never had the issue been so clear; never had force been more surely the only means to an end.

Civilization might take a full breath of relief, but civilization must also realize that the Germans had superior numbers and the advantage of initiative and position. Their losses had not exceeded those of the Allies; possibly they had been less. We had lost much material. With all Europe war-weary, Germany looked to the marshaling of enough divisions in succeeding thrusts to weaken the Allied will until it broke. Faith in speedy victory spurred the German soldier, while the British and the French were to "stone-wall" again as they had at the first battle of Ypres and the French had at Verdun. Another drive, gaining the same depth as that of

March 21st-28th, toward Paris would bring the city under German guns! Another toward the Channel would drive the British army, which already had none too much room for maneuvering, back upon its bases. After four years of war in which tens of millions had been engaged, it seemed possible that twenty-five or thirty fresh attack divisions might decide the fate of the world.

The American officer who had written the figures on the pad in December and said that "it was up to us" was a true prophet. After his return from London, Secretary Baker had a conference with Generals Pershing and Bliss in Paris, while the Germans were still making strides toward Amiens, which even the most sceptical about posterity's judgments will surely consider as of vital historical importance. It considered what we could do to aid in the crisis; and considered, too, the question of unity of command in which General Pershing had been deeply interested from the first. In the course of conversation on board ship in crossing the Atlantic he had said that some one man—it did not matter whether he was a Frenchman or a Briton—must have the power of coördinating effort and plans and o making decisions in the midst of action on the Western front. After his arrival in France he continued to express the same view, but, naturally, our influence in Allied military councils was very limited in the early days of our expedition.

The Supreme War Council at Versailles had in no sense meant unity of command. It was only a body which sought unity of effort through the com-

promises of conferences. General Foch was supposed to have a mobile strategic reserve placed at his disposition to meet the very emergency which had found him without any adequate force for a counter-attack. Instead of assigning him British reserve divisions, the War Council had left the British to take over more line from the French.

Where the threat of the German offensive on the Western front had led to the establishment of the War Council, now the German offensive revealed in its telling application the disadvantage of divided against single command. Those who had conceived the Council as a means of gratifying public opinion in December were under renewed pressure to take the step which should have been taken in December. Many cross currents were at work in that critical time in inner circles of influence, and they brought forth the announcement that General Foch had been made commander of the Allied armies; but, taken with the private reports that one heard, the announcement seemed to make the character of his authority uncertain. Fortunately, Secretary Baker was on the spot, and he might state his views to the Allies and also direct to the President as the result of first-hand information. His cablegram was hardly on the wire when the President, who had intuitively grasped the situation, anticipated the receipt of his request by compliance in one of his own. A few felicitous words from him congratulating General Foch upon his appointment, at a juncture when our influence in Allied affairs had great weight, seemed to be a graceful and definite means of confirming the new commander in complete authority.

On the morning of March 28th, after the conference, General Pershing's desire now having the President's approval, he hurried to General Foch, whom he found in his garden at his new headquarters. He took General Foch by the arm and walking to one side, informally in the impulse of his emotion, speaking in French, offered, as commander of the American army, all our troops and all our material in France to General Foch to do with as he pleased. His words were written out as they were remembered. When they were published they thrilled all France and all America. Coming at the same time as the President's congratulations, they led the public to think that unity of command was an accomplished fact, but it was not, as later developments were to prove.

General Pershing's offer meant the postponement of the idea of a distinct American sector of operations which would have soon become a fact. We had, at the time, four divisions with experience in the trenches of quiet or relatively quiet sectors. Two other divisions were practically formed, although awaiting their artillery. Their occupation of any part of the lines was at least releasing French soldiers for service elsewhere, but this was police work compared to resisting the German offensive. There was not a soldier of ours in the trenches or out of the trenches who did not feel that his place was in the great battle. To their reasoning we must be represented there or we were "not playing the game." Every sentiment that ever called any brave man to the side of a comrade called us to Picardy. Besides, all we had in France, all those structures

we had down in the S. O. S.—what use were they if the Germans should win a decision? We might bring our millions; but where would be their fighting ground?

Of the four divisions the First, of course, had had the most experience. Some professional observers were not certain whether or not even the First was fit to be thrown into the vortex of a violent battle. Others said that there was no division in France which could equal it in an offensive. They wanted to see it in a counter-attack; and our men put the seal on this opinion with their thought that maybe if they had not had enough schooling they could fight. Let them at the Germans! The sequel of the announcement that we would give all we had in any service was that the First was to be relieved from the trenches in the Toul sector and to entrain for the battle area.

The divisions already formed did not represent all our war strength in France. We had our organization thoroughly and systematically built in preparation for larger responsibilities. In the camps at home were a million and a half men who had been as thoroughly trained as they might be in a short time three thousand miles from the battlefield. They waited on the bridge across the Atlantic.

Our programme of troop transport, with its gradual increase as we built shipping, no longer applied when the Allied house was on fire. Ships must be found, Dutch, Japanese, any kind. The man-power of America must be brought to France. England had shipping to spare when disaster on the old

Somme battlefield called for a " speeding up " which nothing else had effected. At the Abbéville conference later, she agreed to supply the bridge, and in return a number of divisions were to be assigned to her army for training and for use in emergency.

XVII

OUR FIRST OFFENSIVE

The First Division being groomed for action—Use for billiard table in war—General Pershing's straight talk to the first American division to enter a battle in Europe—General Bullard—Business details of moving twenty-seven thousand men—French food for Yankee fighters—Approaching a sector of fighting in the open—The First takes it over from the French—Getting ready for the first real American attack—In front of Cantigny just before the zero hour—A quick victory—German revenge—Making oneself at home in "strafed" territory.

OFFICERS and men of the First Division had their part fully planned in their own minds. General Foch would make a great counter-attack. They would be jumped off the train and rushed into a charge. This was the dramatic thing, although not the thing that suited the plan of the moment. With the second German offensive now holding the High Command's attention to the Ypres salient, we were to continue to parry blows before we struck a blow in return.

The First was assigned to a billeting area between Paris and the battle front, where it became a unit ready for action as a part of a strategic reserve. It might be certain that in such a critical period it would not have to wait long before being employed. Never did guests receive a more significant welcome from their hosts than our men in the pleasant coun-

ryside of the Oise. It was not a welcome of arches and flag-waving or ceremony of any kind, but a personal one from men and women who saw the Americans for the first time and saw them as a wall of trained youth between the ruin of homes and the fate of the refugees who had been passing on the roads.

Meanwhile, the shining hours were to be improved by a "brushing up" process, as General Pershing called it. Open warfare having returned to the Western front, trench kinks were to be taken out of the men's minds and legs by drill which was suggestive of the part now expected of them. Each young lieutenant realized afresh the responsibility for taking a platoon into action. Brigade and regimental commanders were busy with innumerable details when not summoned to conferences by superiors. They had no time to discuss the tapestries on the walls of the châteaux which they occupied or to take walks in the grounds. Commanders had great luck in châteaux on this occasion. Spacious dining-rooms became regimental mess rooms where officers ate simple fare in a hurry.

When I sought a colonel I was conducted along a hall with high ceilings and statues and through the great salon to the study of the owner, where the colonel was dictating orders to a field clerk. Everywhere, throughout this war, billiard tables in châteaux have served the same practical purpose for spreading out maps. We followed the custom. Every table in our area was in use. After the war château billiard tables should bear brass placques of this kind: "Upon this table General X. planned

the assault on ——; " or " Here General H. planned his artillery barrages for the battle of ——."

Just by way of making sure that the commissioned personnel should not be idle or lapse into mental ruts, that indefatigable lieutenant-colonel of the division staff, who had been doing this sort of thing with irrepressible enthusiasm since the First arrived in France, " emitted " another training " problem." This time infantry and artillery were to be represented in theory and the officers were to go through all the business of retaking some of the peaceful countryside from an imaginary enemy. General Pershing stood in the village square with General Bullard and a French general and staff officers to watch the staff work in meeting the imaginary emergencies which reports brought from that imaginary front.

The men liked this kind of a problem for a change. It gave them a day to sit about their billets and lounge about the streets. They needed rest to build up tissue as reserve for any forthcoming demand on their strength. That night the officers were asked to write out any suggestions they might have which might be of service, as the result of their experience, and the next morning all the field officers of the division were gathered in a circle back of the château which General Bullard occupied, in order that General Pershing might say a few words to them. He made it clear what was expected of that division as the first American division to enter an active battle sector in Europe; the importance of the determination that " carries through," of holding the confidence of their men and of meeting

situations which no training or orders could anticipate.

It was a good, straight soldier talk, a reminder of the essential, immemorial principles of the offensive spirit in war, the spirit which he had taught from the first. Anyone looking into the faces of the officers, a type of all the officers of our divisions to serve in France, had no doubt of how the First and all of our other divisions would fight. They and the men in the billets were taut of nerve, keyed up for any test.

General Pershing might be thinking of many divisions, but General Bullard naturally was thinking of only one, his own, which he had fathered through the Toul sector. He came from Georgia and retained his Southern accent, a slim, wiry man whose bright eyes twinkled when he made an epigram or flashed when he remarked, "If you are determined to die in your tracks you will not die, but the other fellow will if you know how to fight." He laid great stress on both factors. He was determined that the First should be as steeled to the one as it was well trained in the other. The news that came from the British front was not cheering. Sir Douglas Haig had just issued his appeal to his men to die in their tracks before Béthune; and happily, in keeping with British tradition, the appeal was answered in the deed, according to General Bullard's principles, even as his own men were to answer it when the time came.

The order for the First to move came on April 17th, and the way that we were to carry it out was of itself a test of whether or not we were ready for

action in the sense that General Foch meant; for he does not allow divisions any time to learn lessons of war en route to the front when he makes one of his combinations. An American division is not only twenty-seven thousand human beings with established standards of human locomotion and food consumption; it is guns and wagons and horses and motor trucks, with many units of men and transport, each complete in itself which must be up on time.

For such business typists are required at division headquarters. Every unit must have its written order, specifically stating the hour when it is to move, the route or routes it is to take and its destination, where accommodations must be ready. You may take a map and with marching tables work out the movement in theory; but if the division is not trained the result will be distraction for the staff and worse for the troops when night comes. The First did not know where it was going into the line or when; only that it was to move forward to a given destination.

The orchard where a battery of guns had been parked yesterday was empty now. The infantrymen had put on their packs, fallen in and marched away, leaving the villages to the inhabitants; motor trucks had appeared in front of the châteaux for the officers' baggage; the maps on the billiard tables were packed; and generals and colonels had gone in their cars, leaving silent the halls which had resounded with urgent steps. Twenty-seven thousand men had departed with an automatic time-table facility, leaving no litter behind. Another division

might march in to take their place, with the same absence of confusion.

As the First approached the battle area, it kept to the winding roads between the great main roads, which were thus left free for the traffic that supported the troops at the front, or for sudden emergencies. Unit commanders of troops and transport had maps of their routes, and military police at the cross roads controlled traffic and were supposed to give further directions. The procession of men, guns, horses and motors spent the night in the villages assigned quite as a traveler settles in an hotel where his room is ordered in advance; and the next day all were on the move again for another stage of the journey, which brought us to the points where we should learn what the French army commander was to do with us. An unseasonable snowstorm laid a white blanket on the fields and blew wet and chill in the men's faces; but there was no straggling.

You thought of the First as some great, single organism, many-footed, many-wheeled, with all parts articulated. All was methodically, professionally, done to the lay eye with officers, however, taking notes on mistakes when certain requisites were not on hand or there were misunderstandings due to the difficulties of *liaison* in introducing an American division into an active French army dependent upon French supplies. With the exception of wine, our men were receiving the regular French rations. This was a factor of importance in staff councils, considering that an army marches on its stomach and stomachs have not yet been internationalized—an improvement which may come with the League of

Nations. The French gave us too much bread and too few vegetables. We wanted more sweets and fats and coffee to the American taste in place of the French "pinard." We lacked French expertness in cooking the French canned "Willy" from Argentine which we called "monkey meat." General Pershing saw to it that our quartermasters supplemented the French ration with articles which were necessary for keeping an American fighting man in trim.

French officers came and went from our new division headquarters as we rested in sound of the guns and waited on orders. When the orders came, the First had the sense of relaxation and disappointment of the man who after waiting in a dentist's reception room to have a tooth out is told to come to-morrow. The First was not going into a counter-attack. It was not to make a charge, leaving half of its numbers on the field in a few hours' swift action. It was going into an active sector opposite Montdidier at the nose of the German salient, which, however, was to be change enough from Toul to hold its impatience from any mutinous outbreak until we took Cantigny.

Here, as elsewhere along the new battle front, the German beast had come to a stop, growling, in face of resolute French resistance. Neither side had undertaken to dig any regular line of trenches. We were in virgin battle ground, in notable contrast to the seamed and threshed fields of the Somme and Verdun. Black circles, from shell-bursts, spattered the fields of young wheat. Villages beyond the billeting area, in the active zone, with house doors open and no one inside had a more deserted aspect than

if they were in ruins; for you had an idea that children ought to be playing in the streets and their mothers going about the household work, until a burst of shell fire made you comprehend why all the inhabitants had fled.

The guns had a lot to do yet before they duplicated the swath of destruction of the old line. It takes an amazing number of shells just to level one church. That château with a single breach in its walls from a six-inch would have to come down with time as the Germans warmed to their work, and the adjacent homes would be laid in heaps mixed with splinters of the household furniture, if the new line were established long enough.

Were we beginning the war over again in a fresh theater or was the theater to keep moving? The very instinct of the armies seemed to express the thought that it would keep moving. Stalling, in the old sense, had ceased for the time being on the Western front. Attack would meet attack, offensive would answer offensive, until the decision came. Something that confirmed the idea was in the attitude of the men of our army. Once they were prepared for action they would not be content with nibbling trench raids and limited objectives.

The Germans were scattering their shell fire as if they had not yet made up their minds what should be their targets. " Dead Man's Curve " or " Death Valley " had not yet come into the lexicon of local references as places where you must be consistently on guard. The positions of the French batteries reflected the action of a gathering force which in open maneuver had checked the German wave.

"We may move to-morrow," had evidently been the prompting thought in the gunners' minds, instead of elaborately digging in to settle down to permanent positions. Three batteries in echelon along a valley between a road and forest had an aspect of defiance. If the German guns concentrated on these batteries, their gunners had some shelter in the edge of the woods, where they would remain until the storm passed unless the German infantry were attacking, when they would immediately meet storm with storm. There was an aspect of mobility, of elasticity, of readiness for change, as if armies which had been tied down to stationary warfare for three years did not want to return to their shackles.

The front consisted only of scattered men in the rifle pits which they had dug. Thus, relief for the infantry as well as for the artillery was a more ticklish matter than in a settled sector; and this made our French mentors as solicitously attentive as they had been the first time we went into the trenches. Our regimental and battalion commanders first scouted the ground which we were to occupy. Then battalion and battery and company commanders joined their French "opposites" at the front and familiarized themselves with all the details of their future responsibilities. One night two guns of the American battery moved out and took the place of two guns of a French battery, which made the battery half American. On the morning of the third day, the batteries were all American. In the same way, platoon commanders crawled out to the rifle pits before they led their platoons into position. On

the morning of the third day the front line was all American. " Taking over " had been accomplished without the Germans being any the wiser, if increase of fire on their part was to be taken as an indication. Again the French instructors said pleasant words. There could be only one more lesson, that of an attack in force, before the First must be declared a graduate pupil.

Our hospital reports were sufficient proof that we had a stiffer business in hand than the Toul sector. The Montdidier salient must be active from the very fact that it was not an established line and that neither side had any intention that it should become one. The guns of both sides were prodigal of fire. Villages in the combat zone were gradually tumbling down over the cellars that became the refuge of all concerned. A good deal of digging was required in order to have a minimum of exposure; but the front still remained " open " in the sense that we attempted no trench lines for enemy aviators to photograph for the information of enemy artillery. It was a crafty business of hide-and-seek and searching, harassing fire, thanks to our restless initiative.

The outpost in a rifle pit so constructed, or a shell crater so transformed, as to protect him pretty well from anything but a direct hit by a shell, had to take the weather and events as they came while he faced the German army with mobile infantry supports at his back. On chill, rainy nights of spring he must get what protection he could from his shelter half which seems as sumptuous as a mansard roof by comparison when you lack a shelter half.

It was easy for him to lead a pious life, but not

a comfortable one or one free from solicitude and suspicion. If he were of an imaginary or a pessimistic nature he had food for reflection. He might play safe and sit tight and not attract the enemy's attention; but that is not the way to gain confidence in yourself and mastery over the enemy, and it was not the way of our soldiers, whether they were armed with rifles or with machine guns. They were looking for something to shoot at, and shot at it on all occasions with an accuracy which the German Staff might note for future reference. We made raids and repulsed raids and went through all the grinding, wearing and costly routine under new conditions, until the chance came for the First to "go over the top" in earnest.

The original plan was for a more extensive attack than actually took place. With the First in the center and a fresh French division on either flank, we were to drive ahead for two days to gain the heights of Montdidier and relieve the pressure on the British. Orders were issued and preparations were begun to be ready for this offensive on the 25th of May. Having no regular trenches in the front line, jumping-off trenches must be made. Our men dug a trench two miles long and three feet deep in one night and another on the second night, which were so designed that the enemy would mistake both as being for defensive purposes. All this labor was for nothing. Soldiers are used to such disappointments, when a shifting military situation forces one of those changes of mind which are inevitable when the enemy has the initiative and you have to act upon your information about his plans.

But the High Command allowed us a consolation offensive for the 28th of May, which was to be our very own. We were to take the town of Cantigny, which was almost as gratifying a prospect as that of taking Mont Sec in the Toul sector. Cantigny sat on a hill, which is an unusual characteristic for a French town. Infantrymen in our rifle pits were almost as sick of the sight of it as the whole division had been of Mont Sec. In fact, the First was weary of having the enemy look down on it scornfully from any high ground.

Our own party! A real, sure enough party! What conferences at Headquarters! What a zest in all the discussions! How long should we make the artillery preparation? What should be its character? The word *liaison,* which took the place of coordination in our army lexicon in France, presided over the councils. The detailed orders for our first little offensive would make a good-sized volume. We were in the mood of a young lawyer trying his first case; of a young author reading the proof of his first book; a young engineer building his first bridge. We determined that we would think of everything and that we would make everything very clear in the instructions. Our artillery, which was sufficiently popular with the infantry to be cheered by the "doughboys" as the guns passed, meant to retain its high reputation by the support it gave the men who went "over the top." It would bear down all opposition with its blows; or, if it did not, the French tanks were to assist in looking after machine-gun nests.

Barrages were charted and the firing programme

so specifically arranged that no gunner could go wrong and no battalion or company or platoon commander could fail to know what he should expect from the guns. The system of runners and signals was worked out with infinite care, in order that the command might be in touch with all the units. We imagined ourselves in the place of the Germans in order to anticipate the character of the German response, and visualized all sorts of contingencies.

Reconnaissances, which must be made in order that those who were responsible for the plans should be perfectly familiar with the terrain, were difficult. The German had the whole area of operation within the range of many batteries. He pounded it every night by way of showing us that we were not alone in our desire to keep the sector active. Staff officers who went out to get first-hand knowledge of the ground, dodged from crater to crater between shell-bursts with a keen appreciation of what life was like at the front.

The men who went over the top were to carry two hundred and twenty rounds of rifle ammunition, two hand grenades and one rifle grenade, two canteens filled with water, one shelter half, four sand bags, one flare and one shovel or one pick, and they were to wear their blouses and to leave their blankets behind. They must have enough food and water to remain for two days in their newly-won positions; for there could be no thought that we should not gain our objective. If we did not, the 28th Infantry, which was to have the honor of making the attack because it was fresh and had its turn to go into the

line, could never come back with any grace to face the other regiments which envied the 28th its opportunity. Particularly it would not have wanted to face the 18th, which did much drudgery and valuable service in its support.

Once more the men of the First had to dig jumping-off trenches; and the shell craters where the trenches ran across the fields are sufficient evidence of the character of that task in the darkness before the morning of the attack. But the trenches had to be dug and there was nothing to do but to keep on the job until they were dug in an hour's spirited effort. Those who labored were in a mood befitting the occasion. When a soldier was knocked over by a shell, as he viewed the crater by the light of another burst, after he was back on his feet he remarked: "Thanks for your help; but don't dig so broad and keep on the line!"

A shell that burst in a dump of flares and grenades in the St. Eloi Wood blew up the lot. Here was one of those emergencies which could not be foreseen. Shell fire or no shell fire, the stock must be replaced, and those whose business it was to look after the matter kept hustling until it was.

As the third German offensive had started that day, May 27th, on the line from north of Soissons to west of Rheims, and the Germans were eager to know General Foch's plans, they increased the activity in the neighborhood of Cantigny by three raids. One penetrated our line and took a prisoner. This would never do. The prisoner might reveal our plans for the morning. We set out to recover him and had an affair with his captors in a wheat field

that won him back. By this time he must have been feeling very self-important.

Meanwhile, the 26th Infantry, having repulsed a raid on our right, responded by a counter-raid which took prisoners, which is further evidence that the First was very wide awake in front of Cantigny on the night of May 27th. Incidentally, I should like to make it clear that I saw nothing of the action of the next day and depend upon reports and upon observation of the ground after the attack.

The lieutenants who were to go over the top hardly needed to carry any maps in order to know the programme assigned to their platoons. The details were burned in their brains. Silent as shadows in the darkness, the men moved out to their positions. All the Stokes motars and 37 mm. guns of the 16th Infantry and a half company of engineers and two other machine-gun companies of the 2nd Machine-gun Battalion were to assist the 28th.

For days before the attack the heavy guns had avoided drawing attention to it by shelling Cantigny. At 4:45 on the morning of the attack the artillery began an adjustment fire in which each battery had a fifteen-minute interval; and at 5:45 all the guns began the real preparation. Now the heavies gave Cantigny all they could send and the little town was revealed to the eye of the waiting infantry in lurid flashes. The crashes and the screams and the bursts at the end of the screams in their unorchestrated, monstrous roar were like hundreds of other artillery preparations while the minutes ticked off to zero hour, and the enemy, aroused now to the fact that an attack was coming, began to respond.

At 6:45 in the early dawn of May 28th, as has happened many times before, the line of figures started up from the earth and began their advance. The formations were the same as those of the practice maneuvers, and the movement was equally precise as it kept to the time-table of the barrage. Each unit was doing its part, the tanks as they nosed their way forward doing theirs. Our shelling of the lower end of the town suddenly ceased; and then our men were seen entering the town exactly on time. Headquarters waited on reports, and they came of prisoners taken, of the further progress of units—all according to the charts. We had passed through the town; we were mopping it up; and we had reached our objective in front of the town. Our losses to that point were less than a hundred men, with three hundred and fifty prisoners. A small offensive as offensives go, but our own, and our first.

Going over the top in a frontal attack had been almost tame, it was so like practice exercises. The fact that our practice exercises had been so systematically applied, that, indeed, we had done everything in the book, accounted for the perfect success of Cantigny. There was a glad, proud light in the eyes of our wounded. They had been hit in a "real party." Nobody could deny that they were graduate soldiers now. But there was to be the reaction which always comes with limited objectives when you do not advance far enough to draw the enemy's fangs—his guns. Upon the roads along which men must pass to bring up supplies, upon every point where men must work or men or wagons pass, upon the command posts, he turns the wrath of his resent-

ment over the loss of men and ground, and in his rage concentrates most wickedly, most persistently and powerfully upon the infantry which is trying to organize the new frontal positions.

The German artillery would show this upstart American division its mistake in thinking that it could hold what it had gained. Eight-inch shells were the favorites in the bombardment of our men, who now had Cantigny at their backs as they dug in, while showers of shrapnel and gas added to the variety of that merciless pounding that kept up for three days. We suffered serious casualties, now; but we did not go back, and we took revenge for our casualties in grim use of rifle and machine gun which, with the aid of prompt barrages, repulsed all counter-attacks, until the Germans were convinced of the futility of further efforts.

Later, when I did the usual thing of rising at three in the morning in order to go over our positions at Cantigny, the sector had become settled in its habits though still active. Part of the walls of the château which had had a single hit when I first saw it were still standing; all the surrounding village was in ruins almost as complete as if it had been in the Ypres salient.

From the front line I watched the early morning "strafe" of the German guns; the selected points of "hate," here and there along the front receiving a quarter of an hour's attention, while the crushed remains of Cantigny were being subjected to additional pulverization. We held the line, but with cunning men hidden in the earth. You hardly knew of their presence unless you stumbled on them.

After the German gunners went to breakfast you might slip into the Company P. C. in Cantigny. The captain in command there was perfectly snug, thank you. Guests were welcome if they did not stand about the doorway to draw fire. Let them come below and have a drink of cider from the big casks which were in the safest cellar in town.

No, you might not go forward into the eastern edge of the town. That was a positive invitation to German batteries to open up. The captain knew his positions and knew his business, and he did not want any firing in that neighborhood at the time. Later, you might learn that three individuals were important enough to be shelled if they tried to walk along the road back to Villers Tournelle, where a major who had helped to take Cantigny had coffee and corned beef hash ready for breakfast. Everybody you met at the front had a certain air of proprietorship in the sector; and back at headquarters the thoroughbred veteran chief of staff and all the other officers of that much-schooled First received you with their habitual attitude, which seemed to say, "Any suggestions or criticisms? We are always listening—but, understand, please, we are the First Division."

XVIII

A CALL FROM THE MARNE

A river that for the second time held the world's attention—The Germans third offensive—A smash through for ten miles the first day—Effect on Allied *morale*—Americans called on to block the road to Paris—The Third Division of regulars were ready—The stream of refugees—The incomparable French spirit—The veteran Second Division arrives—An endless train of motor lorries crowded with doughboys—The "joy-ride" of war—The night that "Les Américains" meant much to France.

PROBABLY I received more comfort in the last four days of May from an old peasant a hundred miles back of the lines than from anything I heard at Headquarters. He came out of his house to watch an American chauffeur put on a tire and he was a sage citizen of an old country.

"I hear they are going to have another battle on the Marne," he said. "We'll stop the barbarians there. La, la! We always stop them there. It does not take you long to put on a tire, does it? You travel fast, but you eat lots of dust. La, la!"

The winding kindly Marne, anything but a river of Mars in its domesticated course through rich fields tilled to the water's edge, was again holding the world's thought in connection with a great military decision. On the morning of the 28th our First Division had taken Cantigny, and on the previous morning the Germans had begun their third or Aisne offensive. We Allies had been plan-

ning not to be surprised again; but facing the Germans were tired French troops with a few reserves, and also a tired British corps which had been brought from the British front to a quiet sector to rest.

After a preliminary bombardment of unprecedented volume, which saturated battery positions and vital points with gas to a depth of six miles and more, the Germans broke through all the defenses of this old, powerfully intrenched line for a depth of as much as ten miles in a single day. It is said that Ludendorff meant this attack as preliminary to one elsewhere; but when he found how slight was the resistance which it developed he committed himself to pressing his advantage.

Even Americans could not get much consolation out of our little offensive at Cantigny in this critical period. While our men of the First were digging in to hold the single village which we had taken, the Germans were taking villages by the score. With their infiltrating machine-gun units, using the same tactics as in Picardy in March but improved by experience, they seemed to be moving according to a schedule which was reflected on a battle line drawn further south on the maps at Headquarters by every bulletin. Apparently, they were having a procession of victory. Their *communiqués* were purposely and dramatically brief in their announcement of immense gains in ground, prisoners and material.

The German people were thus informed that their staff, as usual, was winning according to plans. Well might the German armies in their swift progress find fresh strength and fervor in their confidence that the

break was near. They crossed the Vesle; they took Fère-en-Tardenois; they crossed the Ourcq; they approached the Marne and Château-Thierry; they had Soissons and were pressing forward on the plateau beyond Soissons towards Paris.

When would this drive be stopped? Where were our reserves? After four years of fighting when all the armies of Europe were war-weary, the soldiers of all were peculiarly susceptible to the effect of such an operation repeating the success of that of March. A supreme article of faith of all generalship is to use the revival of the spirits of your tired men in a moment of victory to impose your will upon any enemy who is accordingly depressed.

How far was this applying to the results in the region from the Marne to the Aisne during the last days of May? Where we had held our line for four years, the enemy had broken through our defenses and the defenders were in flight. How easy to say, "We ought to stop them at the Vesle!" or, "We shall hold them on the heights of the Ourcq!" when you stood before a map at Headquarters without visualizing the situation in the field.

A great enemy concentration, successful in its first assault beyond expectation, was succeeded as it became tired by fresh divisions of Germans, and they, as they became tired, by others drawn from the immense reserve held ready for such an operation. We must hurry our reserve units from different points of the semicircle. The German reserves were driven straight down the half-diameter. They had a land cleared of population for their movement. We were hampered and depressed by the

refugees who had to fly before the enemy from home in the late spring season, when the wheat and the grass were near the harvesting period and the gardens beginning to yield produce. Confusion in communications and information confounded the plans for dispositions in defense.

You might find grains of comfort where you could, but there were the bulletins. You might talk optimistically and set your jaw, but the words sounded hollow. The honors seemed for the present with German strategy and tactics. It took a man with a big, strong vision or the faith of the old peasant not to feel the moral effect of the swift progress of the German army.

America might be sending over five hundred thousand troops in June; but of what use were these partly trained men if they were too late? It was trained men who were needed on the Marne and on the road to Paris. At the time, there were no American forces between Cantigny and the Toul sector. The only Americans visible behind the new battle area were officers who passed along the roads in automobiles, going and coming on various errands. They might be of official importance, but they were of no combat significance. And the Allies were asking if we could do anything in this crisis. Our potentiality had become the decisive force in their reckoning. We were the real strategic reserve of the Allied cause.

After the four pioneer divisions, the Third (4th, 7th, 30th and 38th regiments), commanded by Major General Joseph Dickman, was the most advanced in training. Although it had not yet received

its own artillery it was about to go into a quiet sector under the support of French artillery. It looked forward, with the same intense curiosity of other divisions, to its first experience in dugouts and under shell fire in the actual presence of the enemy. On the 29th came a change of orders which sent fire along the veins of every man in the division. It was to have a short cut to learning. The decision having been made to send it to the Marne, the next thing was the means of taking it to its destination. Our idea at home that France is a small garden of a country is correct in comparison with our own; but when you have to move divisions from one part to another, the distances are impressive.

For motion-picture purposes, instantly the order came every soldier of the Third ought to have rushed out of his billets on to the road. In that event, they would have had a four- or five-day march in prospect. The French proposed to bring them to the Marne quicker than that by trains, though the provision of trains was a problem, too. When I saw the first detachments marching away from their billets for entraining at village stations, the sight of their sturdy ranks was very convincing. They might have had no artillery, but they had rifles and they knew how to shoot. Give them a line to hold and any German force would soon realize that it had met an obstacle.

The motorized machine-gun battalion did not have to wait on trains. It had already gone, envied of all the units of the division. Of all the knights and soldiers and flying columns which have hastened along the roads of France in answer to a call from

the Marne, none ever made a more dramatic movement than this battalion, with the eyes of the men shining at the prospect of being in the "big party." They would not have to wait on ceremony. Their cars could go right up to the firing zone. And machine gunners were always needed. The battalion was certain of seeing action.

"Our headquarters will be at Condé!" division headquarters said. Condé-en-Brie was just south of the bend in the Marne at Dormans.

The next day, bound toward the Marne, the first sign of the battle which I saw along the road some seventy miles south of the Marne was the vanguard of refugees. I had only a glimpse of them from the swiftly passing car, but it was a glimpse full of suggestion and one that will never fade from memory. A buxom young woman was sitting in a big hay wagon with seven or eight children of ages from four to eight years, I should say, around her, while a small boy of eleven or twelve was proudly driving the horses. She must have been either a school mistress or a good Samaritan who had gathered these young ones, secured a wagon and made an early start for their sake. They were smiling in their first great adventure away from home, probably because she herself was smiling.

Other refugees who had wagons now came on in a procession—the same that we have known through many descriptions. They had traveled day and night, keeping to the main road, as the farther to the rear they were, the less they would interfere with army traffic. Now they seemed safe far from the sound of guns and the scenes of rearguard resist-

ance. They stopped under the shade of the trees and rested, while their horses grazed. Those who had cows milked them, and this meant food for the young children.

When we are advancing the war is always being won and when we are retreating the war is always being lost at the *étappes*. Thus, rumors, which always make bad news, were plentiful at Sézanne.

"You will not reach Condé," said an officer at Sézanne. "The Germans are already there. They are on their way to Paris. It's terrible for France now, but it will be all right for France in the future. You cannot kill France."

His conclusion was correct, if his premises were not. By the token of the smiling children in the hay wagon and of all the refugees, in tenacity and immutability of race you could not kill France. Let conquerors come and overrun France and settle in France, and, in a generation or two, they would take on the character of the French, I think, from the very fact that their roots drew nourishment from the soil of France.

"There was an old peasant down the road," I told the officer, "and he said——"

The officer was too truly French not to respond to that. The air of confusion due to the reports of broken regiments, the sight of the passing refugees and the pressure of the forces falling back on new bases, suddenly cleared for him. He caught the old peasant's perspective.

"We'll stop them on the Marne! We always do!" he said; and he had a new heart for his prob-

lems in a town which had suddenly become near enough to the front to assume importance.

The road from Sézanne to Montmirail, which previously had had little concern with military transport, had other signs than refugees—among them some batteries of guns in rest—which indicated that the settled conditions of nearly four years back of the old front line had been stirred by orders which looked towards threatening possibilities. With the railroad from Château-Thierry to Epernay out of commission, other railroads must care for suddenly increased traffic. Motor trucks which had had their station far back of the present battle line must have new bases. Aeroplanes, which had flown from aerodromes now in German hands, had come to rest in level fields which would be the site of future aerodromes.

Montmirail, which had been a quiet town en route from Paris to Châlons and to Vitry-le-François, was feeling the hot breath of war for the first time since September, 1914. Ambulances arriving from the front crowded the hospitals with wounded, for the Germans were not far away across the hilly, wooded country which stretched up to the narrow valley of the Marne. An officer of the Third, who was at a French army headquarters, said that the Third's headquarters were at Condé and its motor machine-gun battalion had gone to Château-Thierry. On the way to Condé, French army transport going and coming had the road to themselves. There seemed an end of the refugees. Those left north of the Marne could not cross now; those to the south, with a few scattered exceptions, were already away.

The villages were deserted. There would be no lack of room for billets that night. All the countryside was quiet, and the sound of the guns forward indicated a small volume of fire. A squadron of cavalry with saddles on and riders lounging were indicative of readiness for one kind of emergency.

The only sign of Americans, except billeting officers waiting for their guests in the villages, was a company at a railroad station where it had just been detrained and awaited orders to march. I found General Dickman with his staff at Condé. He had an immense empty château at his disposal, besides his automobile and maps, but no food or baggage. As fast as detachments of his division arrived they were put at the disposition of the French.

The Germans were across the Marne, but not in great force, and the French High Command, which knew its American soldiers now, could trust to American riflemen and the French 75's playing on the bridges to do the work required. It hardly seemed likely that the enemy would deepen his salient across the river by pushing farther south. Surely he would broaden it by swinging towards Paris, along the river. Any crucial fighting that was to ensue would take place in that direction.

On May 29th, the Second, a trench-tried division with its experienced artillery, had been under orders to march from the Chaumont-en-Vexin area, where it was billeted, to the Beauvais area. The movement was to begin at six on the morning of May 31st. This order, given on the third day of the Germans' Marne drive, suggests that thus far the French High

Command did not think the situation serious enough to require the services of the Second.

At five o'clock on the evening of the 30th, a French officer appeared with an order that the infantry of the division would start for Meaux in trucks at five o'clock the next morning. At midnight another order came saying that the remainder of the division would be prepared to move by rail at five-thirty. This change of plan was hardly conducive to sleep on the part of officers on the night of May 30th-31st. New detailed orders must be issued and forwarded by courier to all units. As the infantry would be separated from their kitchens for two days, a supply of rations had to be issued. Some units had to march six miles to their entraining points. A multitude of small problems must be worked out during the night to prevent any hitches; but all were surmounted, and the next morning, while the rest of the division waited for trains, the infantry climbed into motor trucks and the long procession started across country.

There is no sight more impressive behind the lines in a crisis than such a movement. A continuous roar stretches along the road, rising in stentorian crescendo as one truck after another looms out of the dust and forges past, all keeping their intervals, all going at the same speed. It is the roar that takes the place of the clatter of cavalry and the double quick of the infantry, which were sent in the old days to stiffen your breaking line or to add weight against the enemy's line that was breaking.

The cumulative effect of such a seemingly endless column, with its passing groups of soldier faces, is

extraordinary. It has the fascination of trained man-power in rapid motion; it appeals to the imagination as the swift and dramatic transfer of a striking force. The men like it—this "joy-ride" of war. They have something of the feeling for the truck that the mounted infantryman has for his horse. When they debuss to go into battle, something of the impulse of the motor column's movement is imparted to their spirits. Given roads enough and trucks and gasoline enough, and a general may move corps about at will to suit his plans. He may fool the enemy aviators by a procession of trucks taking troops one way by day and countermarching them a hundred miles back to their starting-point under the cover of darkness.

From their trucks the infantry of the Second, thirteen thousand men in all, saluted the villages and the countryside as they ran past, eating enough dust en route, as one of them said, to cake his stomach into a mud pie. They had read the *communiqués*. They knew that all this gasoline and transportation were not being expended upon them in order that they make the acquaintance of other families of the great trench rat tribe in some quiet sector.

The only orders which they had was that a French officer at the Town Hall would tell them where to go when they arrived at Meaux; but although the officer was there, the instructions were not. During the time required to send infantry from Chaumont-en-Vexin to Meaux, all kinds of changes may take place on the battle line. Where a division was needed in the morning it may not be needed in the afternoon; or it may be needed in quite a different place than it

was in the morning. At all events, the Second was in striking distance of the battle line; it was strategic reserve subject to call.

Somewhere in the upper world which they call the High Command, decision waited upon developments; and the Second was ordered to go into billets northeast of Meaux. They could not be allowed to remain sitting in valuable motor trucks for any length of time. The first detachments to arrive had debussed and shaken off the dust, and the staff was disposing them in billets, when an order came for the division to take up a position between Gandelu and Martigny where another attack was expected. All the men who had arrived were once more started on their way. Later, at midnight, when the last of the trucks was in, a French officer appeared with an army order saying that the division would concentrate at Montreuil-aux-Lions by a forced march. There was no time for any nice arrangements of road schedules. Somebody had to take the map and lay out routes and hurry instructions by runner to all the units, wherever they were.

The confusion at the rear was at its height, and the time was night after the Germans had made further gains. Rumors grow in the night and hasten the steps of those in retreat. The marching columns in the darkness, intensified by the heavy shade of the trees, must make their way past ambulances and motor trucks that shot by in ruthless possession of the road, and among refugees and their carts and batteries and broken elements of troops and peripatetic cavalry. Out of the darkness as our troops were identified, came cries of "Les Américains!" in

the husky voices of French drivers, the weary voices of men who had fought their hearts out without food or sleep, the faint voices of the wounded and the tremulo of old women and little children among the refugees. "Les Américains!" meant more that night than they ever had in France.

XIX

HOLDING THE PARIS ROAD

The Germans reach Château-Thierry—The motor machine-gun unit of the Third Division that was the first American detachment to enter the battle of the Marne—Marshaling the Second Division into battle—A Chief of Staff who welcomed difficulties—The finished products of General Pershing's training, tanned, lean, confident, marching into battle after thirty-six hours on the road—The two brigades of Marines and regulars—A battalion that marched fifty miles—And took the trail again after a few hours' sleep.

By daybreak of June 1st the infantry of the Second was beginning to arrive at Montreuil, where the news received at headquarters in the schoolhouse indicated that the Germans were still gradually advancing. Generally, the situation was confused in detail, though distinct enough in the necessity of all force possible being hurried forward.

The 9th, which was the first regiment of the Second to reach Montreuil, after being all night on its feet, was sent immediately to take up a position covering the Paris road near the village of Le Thiolet as support for the French troops, who were somewhere in front in contact with the enemy. If further attacks overpowered the French, they were to fall back through our lines in retreat; and our business was to stick. Before night, we were to have all our infantry either in a support line on either side of the Paris road or in immediate reserve.

The Germans had taken Château-Thierry and the crest over which the Paris road runs, the village of Vaux beyond it, and a commanding portion of Hill 204 on the north bank. Hill 204 overlooks the town and both banks of the river for miles on either side of the town, and the main road from Montmirail, which sweeps down from the southern wall of the Marne valley to the suburb of Château-Thierry on the southern side of the river. This tightened the enemy's grip on the northern bank and gave him observation of the southern bank.

Meanwhile, the 7th Motorized Machine-gun Battalion of the Third had literally ridden into battle in a fashion in keeping with their most vivid anticipation. Theirs had been the first American blood shed in the second Marne battle. It hardly seemed that they had had time to reach Château-Thierry from Montmirail before their wounded were returning. Interspersed and mixed with the French, and under French direction, they would be the last to make any claim in keeping with the reports which were spread about their playing a lone Horatius at the bridge. They had used their machine guns as they had been taught to use them in covering the retreat of the French across the bridge, before it was blown up, and afterwards in keeping the Germans from any attempt at a crossing.

When I visited them some days later, they had their guns well placed on the southern river bank facing German machine guns on the other. They had the suburb all to themselves except for the intervals of heavy German shelling and bursts of machine-gun fire from German aviators raking the

streets. One service that they had performed by their deed was to convince the French that the Third Division, although it was raw and without battle experience, was a most gallant organization, if the machine gunners were any criterion of the mettle of the other units.

But this is wandering away from the Second and from the afternoon of June 1st when Major General Bundy sat in a schoolroom, where staff officers used children's desks for writing orders, smoking his cigar with the calmness of a man who was used to the difficulties of moving 27,000 men, 7,400 animals and 1,000 wagons into an active battle sector in answer to a hurry order, while his chief of staff could apply all that he had learned at that school in the wheat fields of Kansas plus all that he had learned in France. The more troubles he had, the more this C. O. S. was in his element. He thrived on the unexpected. To officers who came rushing in, he looked up with a certain zest for more trouble.

"Any rats? I eat rats!" quoth the bull terrier.

He had supposed that the divisional artillery was coming by train only to learn that eighteen of the trains which were to bring the artillery and other transport had been canceled and all concerned told to go by road. Runners were sent out to order forced marches and to give instructions as to destinations. Thus, the Second must wait upon its artillery when at any moment it might have to withstand a strong attack. To arriving units, or to their commanders who preceded them, the C. O. S. clicked off orders locating ammunition dumps, dressing stations and routes for transport with a celerity which indi-

cated absolute confidence in his mission on earth. If he made mistakes—well, he made them promptly. He did not take hours in thinking them out. If he corrected them promptly, when he recognized them, this was so much gain in time.

Meanwhile, French aeroplanes flew over the schoolhouse dropping message cylinders; and these and other bulletins coming in from the front told us that the enemy was pressing in the region of Torcy and farther north in order to broaden their salient, but not yet seriously in front of our new lines, which did not mean that he might not do so at any moment as a part of his tactical plan.

Our eagerness made up for our lack of experience. Every order given showed that we were not thinking in rearguard terms. Our ammunition dumps and all our depots and stations were being pushed forward with a view to coming to grips with the enemy. The spirit in the schoolroom was in keeping with the appearance of the last of the battalions of the Second to arrive, which was passing by the schoolhouse in the late afternoon. These men had not had anything like sleep in the last thirty-six hours. They were tired, but they were not tired "about the eyes," and those weary Frenchmen who had been fighting their way back from the Chemin des Dames were. "Fresh troops!" as a French officer exclaimed in professional appreciation. We had not been fighting for four years. A good night's sleep would cure our fatigue. It could not cure that of the veterans of all the campaigns from the Marne to the third German offensive. We were young, and young to war.

The men in the battalion, almost without exception, were under thirty. Their faces had a deeper tan than the French, an American Indian tan. Their features were sharper than European features. Their close-fitting uniforms, their round packs, which included blankets and outfit in a single, tightly-bound bundle, leaving the limbs and arms free, as for blows, and their bodies trained down to muscular leanness, suggested a mobile compactness. They leaned forward a little as they marched as if to get a grip on the road and to be nearer to their goal. They were the finished products of General Pershing's training; formed in the mold that he had set.

But, I repeat, their most striking characteristic in those surroundings was their youth and the energy, the drive, the impatience of youth. Even our truck and ambulance drivers were young, while the French drivers were middle-aged. I have imagined the roar of a French column of trucks saying, "We are old at war and wise at war!" and of an American column saying, "We are young and we want to learn; gangway for us!" With this went the masterfulness of youth as well as the elasticity of youth.

I recollect how a company of this battalion, when it halted, sent details with their canteens to be filled from the spout of the blessed flowing village well of Montreuil; and how they bathed faces dusty from the march and truck rides in the basin, and their smiles showed their good teeth which they had, thanks to American dentistry. It does not seem right that a soldier should not have good teeth. They are a symbol of strength as well as of clean-

liness. I suppose that a man whose open mouth reveals decayed slivers may shoot as straight or hold as fast under shell fire as any other, but I have an idea that anyone who can take a firm grip of a piece of hard bread or of "canned willy" has a better grip on a "strong point" against an attack.

The battalion, taking up the march again, became as some great khaki caterpillar moving on the white ribbon of road; and then it halted again and passed out of sight into a wood, where it was to wait in reserve and the men might drop on the soft, warm earth and, in want of their rolling kitchens, eat their rations cold and afterward stretch themselves in a spell of lazy talk as they rested. There was one who said, "Well, I hope that I won't get it before I see Paris. I surely do want to see Paris." And then he dropped off in the sound sleep of youth from physical fatigue.

After three or four kilometers, traffic on the road ceased and it lay a white, straight blaze leading on into the unknown in the late afternoon sun. There was scattered gun fire from one side, an occasional shell-burst in answer and the occasional rattle of a machine gun. The German seemed to be taking time to think things over on our immediate front. Drawn by the vacant road, my young chauffeur would have run right on into the German lines if left to himself. When the burst of a 105 sent up a spout of earth near us he was overjoyed.

"Golly! I've seen the holes, but this was the first time I ever saw a hole made. Quick work, eh?" he said.

He wanted to go forward to more bursts; but

some patches of French blue in a clump of trees covering the road with a machine gun were suggestive of how far we had gone past the turning we should have made. This silence, this seemingly uninhabited space, was in a live battle sector at that moment; but let points of German field gray break out of cover to gain still more ground in their knitting crocheting process of advance, and all the clumps of woods would have awakened with vicious and murderous voices.

A turning, further back on the south side of the road, brought you to the headquarters of the 3rd Brigade under Brigadier General Lewis and one on the north to the headquarters of the 4th or Marine Corps Brigade under Brigadier General Harbord. I am mentioning both brigades particularly, as the part of the 4th, or Marine brigade, was to be exploited in a way that might give the impression that the 3rd had not been active. When I had last seen General Lewis he had been Provost Marshal in Paris. Now he had been given a brigade. His opportunity had come. In the farmhouse which was his headquarters, he showed not the least sign of fatigue and his hand was upon his brigade in a way that brings confidence in leadership.

Brigadier General Harbord had come to France as Major Harbord. As Chief of Staff, he had been General Pershing's right-hand man in the little room in the War Department in organizing the departure of the expedition and, later, in building up the organization in France. Two weeks previously he had been "sent to troops," as the saying goes. Both he and General Lewis were to win another star on

their shoulders in the next month and to be given command of divisions.

Thus, the brigades were established in their positions on a twelve-mile front on the night of June 1st. Our men had dug themselves shelters in their support line and the orders, which they hardly required, were to get what rest they could, whether in billets or out under the sky where they unrolled their blankets and shelter halves. The French expected to use them for a counter-attack to-morrow.

In the gathering dusk after the long summer day the 5th Machine-gun Battalion arrived. It was not motorized, and had traveled on its own feet some fifty miles through suffocating clouds of dust, which takes the marching strength out of men. The heads of the horses which drew the little carts were down and the heads of the men who led the horses and of the gunners behind the carts were down, all keeping along at that grudging, yet continuing gait which resolves every ounce of effort and all thought into mechanical leg movement. For it is not the fighting which is the hardest part in many instances; rather, it is the strain of sleeplessness and physical effort in reaching the scene of action.

The weary individual pedestrian counts the miles to the goal, with anticipation an invisible strand drawing him on. The soldier, who does not know where he is to stop, has the advantage of the momentum of the whole to keep him going. He is one particle of a mass. When the mass moves, he moves. The rhythm of steps and comradeship give impulse to his steps. When the word was passed along that at last the battalion had reached its destination, you

appreciated that then the men would realize how tired they were. Any place on the ground would do for a bed; any place of rest off the dusty road.

I mention this battalion because of what was to happen to it before morning. At midnight, the French had reports of a gap in their lines at Colombs and asked if we could fill the gap. The 23rd Infantry was our divisional reserve. Its commanding officer, Colonel Malone, was sent for to come to Headquarters. When the question was put to him he said, "Yes, sir!" and called for a field clerk and dictated the orders for the march and the dispositions with a celerity that delighted the French general. Thus the gap was filled; and with the weary 23rd went a weary battalion of Marines and that very weary 5th Machine-gun Battalion. There was real heroism in the way those machine gunners received the news.

They made a few caustic remarks, and some started humming the what-do-we-care tune to readjust their perspective to the change; and then they began treading the road again. Civilized will-power is a great thing. It carried the machine gunners to their new positions. If they did not get a shot at the German to pay for this hike—well, their opinion of the Staff would not be improved.

The day had recorded further fierce fighting around Rheims and in the neighborhood of Villers-Cotteret and in the region on the Second's left flank. There had been no further effort on the part of the Germans who were across the Marne at Dormans to extend their lodgment on the south bank, where they were content to hold what they had gained,

leaving the river between them and the French at other points. "We shall stop the barbarians at the Marne!" as the old peasant had said.

Not all of the Third Division's infantry had reported, even on the second day after the motorized machine-gun battalion had been in action. One battalion had been delayed by a train wreck. Units that arrived were already being interspersed with the French and some were already engaged. One regiment and, later, a battalion of another were to be sent across the Marne at Nogent, where we held both banks with an intact bridge, to assist in holding the enemy from pressing farther toward Paris. As a division, the Third was in a process of decentralization which was to leave General Dickman subject to varying vicissitudes of authority which included French troops as well as portions of his own under his direction at times.

XX

BELLEAU WOOD AND VAUX

The stiffening effect of our presence on the French troops—A crisis in ammunition promptly met—Under the watchful eyes of the Germans—Belleau Wood and the Marines—A wood bristling with machine guns—It is a tradition and our nature to "go to it"—How the Marines "went to it" in Belleau Wood—And took Bouresches—The regulars, in rivalry, go a little too far—Cautiousness not the besetting sin of our soldiers—A hunt of man-hornet nests—Our men refuse to consider that rules of the German General Staff—A bunch of wildcats!—The 3rd Brigade of regulars cleans up Vaux.

Our entry into the Marne battle had been dramatic, and the French have a strong sense of the dramatic. A reference in the French *communiqué* to the part which our machine gunners had played at Château-Thierry appeared when the outlook was most critical and just before the German offensive slowed down. Word of mouth news, which supplements official news, traveling fast under the censorship, when every ear is open and every tongue has only one theme, only increased the moral effect of the part we played.

Every peasant who saw the motor machine-gun battalion of the Third flying along the road told other peasants, who told still others. Our soldiers in box cars bound toward the Marne were agents of a reassuring publicity. By the morning of June 1st America was in evidence in marching troops, in motor-truck columns and dispatch riders all the way

from Montmirail to Paris. French officers and dispatch riders and motor-truck drivers were the heralds of our advent along all the roads leading to the front. At last America was seen and felt. She was no longer associated with stable trench sectors, but had become a mobile factor in defense against a threatening and powerful offensive.

When a column of motor trucks carrying American soldiers passed through Paris, although the fact was not published in the press, all Paris knew it in a few hours. The number of trucks and soldiers had been doubled by the time the report reached the suburbs, and it was further multiplied as it reached the provinces through travelers and over the telephone. Bordeaux and Marseilles, Tours and Dijon, all France had this tidbit which appealed to popular imagination when Paris was supposed to be in danger.

Where the effect told most was with the French troops. Those in front of the Second Division, which was still in a support position on June 2nd, spoke in no uncertain terms of the stiffening effect of our presence. As I have said, it gave them resolution in holding the strong German attack that the Germans made that day in an effort to continue their advance. Our machine gunners assisted in its repulse. The French were driven back at points almost to our lines, but pride of race and of veterans in the presence of a young force had its influence in strengthening a determination that deterred them from leaving the task to us.

The night of June 2nd thus found us secure in the positions we had taken up on the night of the 1st,

with all our communications being organized and transport, engineers, signal corps, and, best of all, our guns, arriving. The camouflage of the gun barrels was hidden under layers of dust, and horses drooped and men nodded from snatches of sleep on the jouncing carriages and caissons, but they were ready to go into positions and begin firing when the orders came for immediate action.

When it was found—an unpleasant fact at the time—that our artillery and the French artillery, too, were short of ammunition, the chief of staff of the Second unloaded trucks carrying small-arms ammunition and sent them to bring back a supply which, it was said, was particularly reserved for emergencies by General Pershing's order. Was not this an emergency? The chief of staff thought so, and has not yet been court-martialed for his action. In fact, he was later made a brigadier, though not for purloining the C.-in-C.'s ammunition. Other things in his career during the month of June were considered. He is not coy in his relations with the enemy.

On the 3rd, the German confined his attacks for the most part to the northward of us, but was evidently feeding in machine-gun groups on our front with a view to future mischief. On the early morning of the 4th, we took over from the French a twelve-mile front, with the 3rd Brigade holding from Bonneil to well across the Paris road and the 4th from its left to the west of Belleau Wood. The 23rd Regiment and the Marine battalion and the 5th Machine-gun Battalion which had been sent to fill the gap at Colombs were returned to the divi-

sion, which now became a united family holding its own sector. We might do as we pleased, then, in that twelve miles of battle line, with no reserves between us and the Marne; and this meant we would not leave the Germans to do the attacking.

From Hill 204 all the way to our right the Germans had the advantage of observation. Our roads, particularly, were under the watchful eyes of German balloons. German aviators scouted our positions all too freely. I saw them flying so low over our infantry that the Iron Crosses on their wings were visible to the naked eye. They dropped bombs in broad daylight.

The country is uneven, with many woods and the usual open fields between woods and villages. In front of the Marines the Germans held the important tactical point of the village of Bouresches and the railroad station, and they had filtered into the adjoining Belleau Wood and around it as an ideal cover for machine-gun nests. This Bouresches-Belleau line was excellent for the purposes of the enemy if they were to stabilize their positions and cease to advance, or as a jumping-off place for continuing their offensive.

The spirit of rivalry between the 3rd (a regular brigade) and the 4th (the Marines) was very pronounced. No regular was going to admit that any quarter-deck soldier was in his class; and no Marine—he considered himself as belonging to a *corps d'élite*—was going to allow any impression that he was not a little better than any regular to get abroad, if he could help it. Marine officers might not have had the schooling in tactics of the regulars,

but being plain infantrymen, with no expectation of developing into Joffres or Hindenburgs, they considered that at least they were not afraid to fight. People had said that the Marine Corps was an anachronism and ought to be eliminated from our armed forces. Its honor and future were at stake there before Bouresches and Belleau Wood. If it were to get more recruits as a small organization, which is hardly accepted by the army and not, perhaps, altogether by the navy as a little brother, it must be worthy of those recruiting posters at home.

A Marine colonel fastened the globe insignia on the collar of General Harbord; and formally made him a Marine. The General said that he was as proud as if they had given him the *Médaille Militaire*. As he did not propose to leave the advantage of tactical positions to the Germans when they were nearer Paris than they had even been before, he proceeded to act with full faith in the capabilities of his brigade and its restlessly belligerent manhood. One of the Marine regiments had come to France with the First Division, and, as I have already mentioned, had been demobilized for a time to do guard and courier duty. The other had had long training. Both had veteran non-commissioned officers, and no one questioned the disciplined and soldierly bearing of every platoon in the brigade.

On the 4th, the first day that they were in the front line, the Marines repulsed a German attack. At dawn, on the morning of the 6th, the second day after they were in the line, they made an attack in conjunction with the French on the left to rectify the line in the direction of Torcy; and they went

through machine-gun fire and shell fire to their objectives, doing it all according to pattern. This might have been enough for a day's work; but it was only an introduction to what was to follow.

The way to act in an active sector was to be active, according to General Harbord's idea; and the obvious place for a first offensive on our line was in front of the 4th Brigade, to the regret of the 3rd Brigade. At 2 P.M. an order was typed off at Brigade Headquarters for an operation beginning at 5 P.M. which was to take both Bouresches and Belleau Wood. There was a brief, raking artillery preparation of the wood and a concentration on Bouresches, which was to be stormed in the second phase after Belleau had been won.

In the name of the months that they had drilled, of the hardships endured, of the wearisome vigils of a harassing trench sector and of their corps, the Marines could have only one thought: success. Senior officers could not consider the niceties of the craft in not exposing themselves. They must put their personal weight and influence into this, their first attack. Every man was too preoccupied to think of risk. With the jauntiness of parade, and the offensive zeal which had been long nursed become a burning desire set on the goal of that dark clump of trees and undergrowth ahead they advanced into the wood.

At the very outset they met machine-gune fire; and out of the wood after they were in it came the persistent rattle of rifle fire, varied by veritable storms of machine-gun fire. Wounded began to flow back down the various ravines. Calls came for Stokes mortars

from the hidden scene of that vicious medley, along with the report that Colonel Catlin had been wounded a half-hour after the attack was begun. The machine-gun positions in the outskirts of the woods had been taken; but they were only the first lot. I have been through many woods where German machine gunners had ensconced themselves, and none that I remember afforded better positions for defense against any enemy in the wood or against one approaching it from our front.

Not only was the undergrowth thick, but there were numerous rocks and ravines and pockets, all of which favored the occupant. There was nothing new in the system which the Germans applied, and which the Allies also apply; but not until troops go against it for the first time do they realize its character. Its formidability is dependent upon the stoutness of heart of the defenders, their craft and the number of their guns. With the thicket so dense that it prevents a man being seen even fifty feet away, a weapon with a range of three thousand yards is easily screened. Each gun has its zone of fire, in relation to the others, to sweep every square yard of the ground; and fire is held until it will have a maximum effect. There is no flanking any gun, when the supply of guns is sufficient, for hidden guns are waiting to turn their blasts on the effort; and guns, furthermore, are placed in such a manner as to give both lateral and plunging fire.

Crafty veteran soldiers might have decided, as soon as they had developed the character of the defenses, that the cost of going on was too high; and a veteran, crafty staff, accepting the dictum of experi-

ence, would have adopted more arduous measures, involving powerful artillery work, for accomplishing their purpose. Such woods as these had been many times submitted to hurricanes of shells that had uprooted all the young trees and left only the limbless, slashed trunks of old trees standing before they were taken, particularly in former days before we came to open warfare tactics.

When they could locate a gun our men concentrated their rifles upon it. The crackle of bullets passing about the gunners' heads, even if they were not hit, might stop them from firing; but, meanwhile, some other gun was cutting the twigs around the heads of the marksmen. The wounded crawled back behind rocks, or into ravines, or to any place where they could find a dead space. The instinct of our men, caught in such a mesh of fire which was every minute causing a casualty, was to come to close quarters; and they wanted to go free of packs, of blouses, shirts open, rifle in hand, with their faith in their bayonets. Hot cries accompanied the flashing drive of the cold steel through the underbrush. Many bayonets might drop from the hands of the men who were hit, but some bayonets would "get there." And that was the thing—to get there.

We have always fought in this way. It is tradition and our nature. "We go to it!" as we say. German gunners ran from their guns in face of such assaults; others tried to withdraw their guns; others were taken in groups huddled in ravines as youth, transcendent in its white rage of determination, bore down upon them and gathered them in or, again, drove the bayonet home into gunners who stuck to

their guns until the instant that forms with eyes gleaming leapt at them. Our young platoon commanders had the task of leading all to themselves in the thickets among the tree trunks, as they always have in such fights, while senior officers wait on the result. When night came we had to yield some of the ground which we had taken or remain without cover in the face of the blasts; but we had securely established ourselves in a portion of the wood. With captured German machine guns, men, whom we could not reach with food and water, held their gains, taking food and water from the American and German dead.

Although the first phase of the attack had not been fully accomplished, it was determined not to hold back the other companies, which had been waiting under shell fire that only aroused their eagerness to advance, from undertaking the second phase. Theirs was a simpler task than that of their comrades who had stormed the wood. Artillery preparation in clearing the way was, of course, more serviceable against a village than against a wood, and neither machine gun nor shell fire delayed the precision of the movement across the open into the village where, with the avidity of their zeal and the supple quickness of their litheness and youth, and in the elation of their first experience of the kind, our men cleared the cellars of Bouresches of all Germans in hiding and gained their objective. Then they set about with equal energy preparing protection against the retaliatory bombardment which was bound to come. Bouresches was solidly theirs when morning came; and they proved it by withering a German counter-

attack with their rifle and machine-gun fire. The Germans covered the roads to the rear with their artillery in revenge. A lone man could not approach the town without being sniped at and shelled for weeks to come.

The regulars, too, were not altogether out of the action. A portion of the 23rd Infantry was due to advance in *liaison* with the Marines, in order to establish a satisfactory tactical line, or, roughly, to prevent a salient. This frontal warfare is always a game of contriving salients for the enemy and avoiding them for yourselves. There seems to have been a little misunderstanding about the character of the coöperation and the time of movement. It was enough for the regulars that they as well as the Marines had a chance to attack and they made the most of it, lest they should not get another.

They had an objective so limited that their enthusiasm carried them over it at a time when shortage of ammunition did not allow of artillery support. There were Germans ahead and they were going to reach the Germans. The Germans proposed to hold them off. A close and ugly duel ensued, waged around German machine-gun nests, with the result that groups of Americans each sought a new objective on its own account. The regulars were waging a battle of their own and winning a victory of their own which was outside of staff plans.

These warriors were a little cross when they were brought back in the night to dig in along the line of their original objective; but, as they said, they had " mixed it up " with the Germans, anyway, and their opinion still held that an American—they would even

include an American Marine—could lick a German. Their regimental commander, in turn, ought to have been wroth with them, as this kind of a runaway, free-for-all fight beyond an objective is strictly against the rules; but he concluded that it was better to have such a spirit in soldiers than too much caution.

I fear that caution was not our strong point. As novices, we wanted all the emotions. Our imaginations expanded with the very thought of being in the Marne battle. Some men probably had the inner prompting that it was in keeping with ethics to expose themselves lest they should be accused of timidity, but rarely was this the reason. Instances of recklessness were due to the sheer intoxication of the moment and to overwhelming curiosity, and particularly to the desire to come to close quarters with the enemy. Visiting officers from G. H. Q. and other headquarters, who came to acquire information for application in the training of other divisions, must go up under shell fire and into the front line if they were allowed, or else they would not be fully instructed.

The young officer who, I am informed, drove a motor into Bouresches the day it was taken, being shelled all the way in and all the way back, had a glorious time and was congratulating himself on his experience until he was inducted into the professional truth that he was several kinds of a fool who had been exposing others who might be useful members of the army. A commander of a battalion, when his men were waiting for the moment of attack, saw a man in uniform standing up in the line some distance away. There was a burst of very strong

language emphasized by a blankety-blank from the commander on the subject of lying down and not drawing fire. The man looked around blandly and was recognized as a chaplain.

"Well, well," he said chidingly, "you are very vehement, but I suppose that it takes all kinds of men to make a world."

Then something cracked close to the chaplain's ear which made him drop lower than his knees, whether in prayer or not witness sayeth not.

The motor-dispatch rider carrying messages to our machine gunners in the Château-Thierry suburb had to pass over a long and sinister stretch of exposed road which was frequently shelled. His cycle was damaged, he had been wounded and had been knocked down by a piece of shell that penetrated his helmet to the scalp and would have given the ordinary mortal concussion of the brain; but his only source of distress was that they would not allow him to go out and snipe at Germans on the Marne in intervals when he was waiting for messages.

Meanwhile, the Marines were there in Belleau Wood cheek by jowl with the Germans, who were doubtless slipping more machine guns into their portion of the wood. The Germans must be made to understand that this wood belonged to the Marines; while the Germans to discourage further attacks on our part began gassing the approaches both to Bouresches and Belleau. In that era a real "hate" was on. We had grim work in removing our wounded and burying our dead, and dangerous work in bringing up wagons over shelled roads and forwarding rations to the men in the front line, with the

3rd as well as the 4th Brigade. But Bouresches sent back assuring news from its isolation. The water supply was good. The men had hot coffee and they caught chickens and killed a hog and a cow. Their messages were so very cheerful out in that village crumbling under shell fire that you might have thought they were having a holiday in a summer resort. Wasn't it their village, and the first that the Marines had taken?

Before our next attack on Belleau we gave it a more powerful artillery preparation, and we learned afresh the lesson that guns will not reach machine-gun nests in the midst of congeries of boulders. A machine gun is a small target when well placed and a direct hit, or a very close hit, of a high explosive is required to put it out of action. Shells burst prematurely upon striking tree trunks and before reaching the earth.

When our men advanced at five o'clock on the morning of June 11th they found resistance at least softened. Some machine gunners who had not lost their nerve after the hour's artillery pounding stuck to their posts; others at the sight of our men breaking through the thickets threw up their hands; others went in hiding among the boulders, no longer soldiers, but children frightened by the lightnings. The nests that held us back formed islands in our progress which had to be cleaned up by special details.

Let it be repeated that the very irregular bow shape of Belleau Wood, no less than the character of the ground, favored the defenders in forming cross zones of fire. It was a strange and fierce business there in the dense brush, where men of the

same squad could not keep touch with one another at times. Happily, we had located some of the nests before we attacked, but those farther ahead we could locate only when they began firing or when we stumbled upon gunners who were still hugging cover after the bombardment, or simply had concluded that it was better to be a live prisoner than to die for the Kaiser. They were taken in groups and singly, taken standing behind trees and hugging the holes they had dug in the earth. Some were trying to retreat with their guns; others fled precipitately, and many kept serving their guns. It was a hunt of man-hornet nests, with khaki the hunter and the German gray the hunted. Our men fought even more fiercely than in their first attack. They wanted to finish the Belleau Wood job this time; but this was not to be, though we had taken thirty machine guns, two *minenwerfers* and three hundred prisoners.

After advancing to a certain point we again met the machine-gun nest system working too thoroughly to permit of further effort, except at unnecessary sacrifice. The colonel who had made the attack said that with further artillery preparation he believed that he could master the rest of the wood. When the guns had again done their duty his men, whose eyes glittered now at the very mention of Belleau Wood, made another attack with the ardor of men who have faith that one more fierce effort would do the trick. They took more prisoners and more machine guns. For a time, the news that the runners brought back indicated that success was complete.

Now, the enemy, smarting under our success, be-

gan bringing up reserves and concentrated a terrific artillery fire on Bouresches, the wood and all the neighborhood. The wood had become a point of honor with the Germans no less than with the Americans. They saturated it with a bombardment of yperite gas which clings to the earth and the trees and burns flesh that comes in contact with it. As the Germans could hardly send their own men into this area for two or three days to suffer the effects intended for us, we withdrew all except a small maintaining force from Belleau. Meanwhile, the Germans with their reserves made an attack in force on Bouresches. By all criterions this attack ought to have succeeded. Some Germans penetrated the edge of the village and a good many of them remained there—dead. Our machine-gun fire and rifle fire drove all others who escaped back to their lines. At the same time, under cover of their artillery, the Germans had reënforced their machine-gun units which remained in the edge of the wood, probably thinking that as soon as the effects of the yperite were over the recovery of the wood would not be difficult.

For twelve days, now, the Second Division had been in the line and the Marines had put all their physical and nerve vitality into the effort against Belleau. They had gone into the fight in the fettle of race horses. Glimpses of the approaches to the wood during an attack, when retaliatory shell fire descended on wounded and German prisoners alike, formed the most vivid picture of war that I had yet seen behind the American lines. The prisoners regarded their captors in a kind of wondering and

tragic stupor. Their staff had told them that the Americans were untrained, a mob, negligible. Yet these Americans had charged straight at the machine guns; they had crept around the machine guns and then leapt out of the thickets with furious abruptness. They were untamed, wild, refusing to consider the rules laid down by the German Staff for their conduct. Captured German intelligence reports, contradicting German propaganda, spoke of them as only needing a little more training to be first-class shock troops according to the German conception—which was a real German compliment.

The battalion which had made the two attacks that all but finished the task, suffering from machine-gun fire, mortar fire, shell fire and gas, had reached the stage of exhaustion when nature overwhelms will; when, although a man says, " I'm all right—as good as ever! " his eyelids droop as the sentence is finished and the next moment he falls dead asleep. This battalion must have rest; and the remainder of the brigade, with all its spirit and energy responding to the driver's hand, must also have some relief from the strain.

A regiment from the Third Division was now introduced into the brigade for six days and sent into Belleau, a regiment that had not had long training and was unfamiliar with the ground and with such merciless fighting in such surroundings; and the tired, tried 4th Brigade of the Second, which had had no rest, took over the task in Bouresches, where, under the persistent shelling, the lookouts kept their " death watch " while all the other men were under cover. If the death watch were killed, another man

took his place in keeping a lookout for any movement of the enemy which would require that every member of the garrison go to the position assigned to him for resisting an attack as soon as the enemy barrage had lifted.

The Germans had been strengthening their remaining strongholds in the wood, and particularly one stronghold among a congerie of boulders in very dense thicket with every avenue of approach covered by its fire. Units of the Third Division were to try on June 21st and 22nd to force their reduction, but fortune was not with the attempts. Some of the German machine gunners, it was reported, had put on American uniforms, which enabled them for a time to deceive our own men as to the progress of our attacking parties, with resultant ambushes.

The Marines were put back in Belleau, relieving the regiment of the Third. The Germans still had access to go and come freely to their strongholds in the north end of the wood. It was an old trick with the Germans, this holding the edge and approaches of a wood with the main body of the wood protecting them from shell fire. On numerous occasions it had been successful. General Harbord was determined that it should not be successful on this occasion. The Marines made another effort with very small forces which failed; but in this effort they gained the knowledge for the final one that succeeded when all their preparations were correct in every detail.

As one of the reports that came back said, "Our men went through them like a bunch of wildcats!" There could be no better description of what hap-

pened. That last rush, after artillery preparation, had a cat-like ferocity which put all thickets and all machine-gun nests behind it, and looked out into the open beyond the object of three weeks of straining muscle, sleepless vigil and desperate courage. Once we were among them, the Germans who remained alive bent to the storm. The two hundred prisoners taken in that little area was a further proof of the importance attached to the wood. The German dead who were buried there, after they had fought with a fiendish resolution that trained German soldiers should not yield to untrained Americans, were still further proof.

Our attacks on Belleau Wood had been justified by the result. In all we had taken seven hundred Germans alive out of the woods, and severe as our casualties had been, the prisoners exceeded the number of our dead without counting the numerous German dead, which, in the cold accounting of war, was an unusual accomplishment. We had also proved our mastery over the enemy. We had set out to take a position and we had taken it, which was of infinite value to the *morale* of a young army and of corresponding influence in weakening that of an enemy when he faced our troops. Forever, the Marines will consider the Belleau Wood as theirs, and in recognition of their title the French changed the name to that of Marine Brigade Wood.

Another phase of the A. E. F. development had passed. The skillful First had taken a village in an established sector. Now the Second Division had taken a wood; and villages and woods, particularly woods, are the points of resistance in France, the

symbols of success and failure. There remained only one further experience to complete our curriculum: participation in a great offensive drive, which was to come.

Continuing with the history of the Second in the month of June and thus anticipating chronology, we come to the capture of Vaux and positions along the line to Hill 204 on July 1st by the 3rd Brigade, which had been repulsing minor attacks and making some minor attacks often under shell fire, while the 4th Brigade had been holding the stage. Vaux was a slightly larger village than Bouresches, situated in a valley before the road rises to pass over the crest to Château-Thierry. Our intelligence service had located every house with a large cellar in the place and the Germans must be in the cellars. Acting upon this information, the work of the artillery was easily plotted. The accuracy of its fire, as the ruins revealed afterward, was more in keeping with sharp-shooting than shooting with guns. Plump—plump! we put the heavy shells into Vaux with a merciless regularity as a nerve-wrecking introduction to the final storm which we visited upon it before the infantry attack.

Through the four weeks in our active line the men of the 3rd Brigade had been hardened and disciplined, learning self-reliance and team play. Held to one line, while the 4th Brigade had had continual offensive action, their ardor, now that their turn for attack came, was schooled with very exact instructions as to the details of the operation. Emergencies had been foreseen. Each officer knew his part. There could be no faltering in the face of fire

considering the spirit of the men, which was further aroused by fifteen hours' intense shelling which they endured from the Germans before they went over the top.

On our right we were to advance in *liaison* with the French who were to attack Hill 204, which I have already described as commanding Château-Thierry. Thus, the movement was broader than a front necessary for attacking the village. We made it with a clockwork precision behind our barrage. When machine-gun fire developed that was one of the emergencies. We took care of the machine guns with rifle fire and automatics and encircling tactics.

Five minutes after our men had gone over the top they were in the outskirts of Vaux. Having maps of the location of cellars, the details assigned for the purpose knew exactly where to go in order to gather in the garrison as prisoners. There were sharp encounters, but they did not last long. Our advance had been too rapid, our artillery fire, thanks to the excellent observation we had of the town in the valley, too effective to allow of much resistance. "There's nothing to it; it's a cinch!" the captors of Vaux said. Vaux was a perfect success, so smoothly conducted that it was void of sensational incidents. The 4th Brigade had taken five hundred prisoners as further evidence that it was doing its part in keeping up the record of the Second Division.

XXI

WOUNDED AND PRISONERS

Flattering rumors of our fighting powers—The ethics of close-quarter fighting—Our men fought cleanly and honorably—With the arrival of our wounded the Red Cross was found ready for every emergency—Our wounded take hardships as a matter of course—Compensations for being wounded—Do wounded men "want" to go back to battle?

For the Allies the action of the Second and Third Divisions was a blood-test of our purpose in the war. It silenced the last of the insidious whispers back of the lines which said that we might be relied upon only to build warehouses and do Red Cross and Y. M. C. A. work and hold quiet trench sectors, and it also silenced those comrades-in-arms of the whisperers, the German propagandists, who said that as we would not even go to war against Mexico in our material interest, we would never fight very hard in Europe, where we had no material interest. We were fighting in Europe, of course, in order that gentry who reasoned in this fashion might be enlightened about the cause of the war.

The French made us veritable prodigies of valor; and at home our people were as enthusiastic as every people are when in any war its sons, by their gallantry, renew the faith which every country has in its manhood. Reports, based upon the pantherish

quality of our soldiers, sent us into action in Mohammedan fury stripped to the waist. The accuracy of our shooting surpassed any target range records. Life was nothing to us. We were rash beyond all reason. We saw red when we charged and kept on going until we killed the foe or were killed. Considering the immense army which we were assembling, it was most reassuring to France to think in this fashion.

Gossip said openly and public reports hinted that we did not bother to take prisoners. The reported remark of the Australians that we were good soldiers but a "bit rough" was a conversational tidbit in London and Paris in keeping with the idea, held in some quarters, that men who came from overseas must have the streak of savagery which is associated with lands where civilized races have supplanted savages.

We might as well consider this subject now by saying, to begin with, that any commanding officer who incites his men not to take prisoners is a fool. If there is anything that makes an enemy fight with the desperation of a rat in a hole, it is the conviction that his life is forfeit in any event. We should welcome taking the whole German army prisoners.

There are occasions when no quarter can be given. When you are fighting in the darkness you must kill any enemy who shows sign of action. When he is in a reckless mood, you cannot leave him loose at your back in a trench while there are plenty of hand grenades and rifles within his reach. From the moment that he holds up his hands it must be assured that he is a non-combatant for the duration of the

war. If an enemy has developed the habit of surrendering and then re-entering the fight when an opportunity offers, he must realize that he will not have the advantage of a doubt in a crisis. As between taking an enemy's life and having your life or the life of a comrade risked, you take the enemy's life. This is efficient war-making; and the process works out without deliberation, when blood is hot.

A machine gunner who sticks to his gun while he looks out from his nest at the bodies of men fallen from his fire a few yards away, and who throws up his hands and cries "Kamerad!" as the survivors of the charge press upon him, cannot expect to stay a bayonet thrust from one of the comrades of the fallen, where mercy would only encourage other gunners in other nests to continue killing to the last second in the confidence that "Kamerad!" will save their lives.

Yet our men have given quarter on such occasions, out of the instinct which arrests a blow at the sight of a man who places his fate in your hands. I have heard no verified accounts of killing in cold blood. It is against our nature. Of course, some soldiers will talk "big," particularly if they think that the listener wants to hear something grisly and bloody; but they do not act up to their talk.

"Your Kaiser's got you in wrong! We're going to keep pounding you till you find it out, you poor boobs!" as I heard one American soldier say to some prisoners. This seems to me a fairly illuminating expression of our attitude and our cause. We have fought cleanly and honorably, and those who

bear the burden of death and hardship require no incentive from rumor-mongers in order to continue to do their duty in the light of their principles and of sound military training.

Our surgeons had now to meet red emergency in the field and in the hospital at Meaux. The Red Cross, which in the early period of the expedition had had to find other fields of service than that of caring for wounded, might come to the assistance of the Army Medical Corps. Major Perkins had foreseen such an emergency and his organization had accumulated immense quantities of supplies of all kinds. It was ready in a kind of work in which readiness is everything. It has the advantage over that great official machine, the army, in being able to pay cash and in summoning civil assistance for short periods to meet sudden requirements.

Indeed, for all the auxiliaries the June fighting and the much heavier July fighting that was to follow meant an introduction into a new and active phase. The Y. M. C. A. and the K. of C. men were rushing about in their little trucks to supply hot coffee, lemonade, chocolate—anything they could find in Paris for the tired and hungry fighters when they returned from the front with prodigious appetites. It was an occasion, also, when the sheep might be separated from goats among the workers; the line drawn between the man and the woman joy-riding to Europe for a six-months' tour with a fondness for a station in Paris, and the man and the woman who had the real spirit of service.

The Red Cross tented hospital on the race track at Auteuil, on the outskirts of Paris, sprang up as

by magic because all the material for it had been in storage. It was most reassuring to the visitor in its up-to-date appointments and organization, as it received the wounded who had been evacuated from the hospitals at the front. To the wounded in the airy marquees in soft June weather, the wonderful thing was that they were to see Paris. They could consider that prospect as they lay on their cots, unless pain numbed their thoughts. The severe cases which hung on the edge of the other world breathing with an effort, or faintly; the acute cases, with eyes dazed; the cases of a little gas burn, or a light shell wound, or a bullet wound—superficially one hospital is much like another. All who were getting better were happy in the way that only men who have been wounded understand. Hospitalization had not been quite all that it should be at the outset of our fighting on the Marne, owing to an American division having been introduced into the French army at a time of stress and some confusion; but there was no complaint from officers or soldiers. As we were a people used to home comforts, it might be wondered how we should bear hardships; but we took them as a matter of course.

Wasn't it war? And the most terrible of all wars? For three years we had been reading of its horrors, of the misery of the trenches, of the use of gas and flame throwers, of the hideous wounds from shell fire and of battalions which had been shattered and renewed again and again. We had seen pictures of ruined villages and trench lines smashed by preliminary bombardments. We had had three years of instructional preparation for what we should have

to endure if we gave up our security and took part in the inferno.

A generation unfamiliar with war had the advantage of an example in its own time to restrain the enthusiasm which goes forth at the march to the strains of martial music to an adventure whose character only a previous generation which had fought could understand. A reasoning and keenly perceptive democracy, we went into the war with our eyes open. A nervous people, we bore our pain better than the Germans who boasted that they had no nerves. I had an idea that the young German recruits had been kept from thinking of the consequences of battle and that pain came to them as a surprise. The Kaiser had not mentioned this incident in world conquest for glorifying the Hohenzollerns.

Convalescent, bathed and shaved, our Americans in the marquees at Auteuil or at the base hospitals might enjoy the thought that now they were entitled to a wound chevron. They might sleep as much as they pleased after days without sleep. Only those who had carried a pack and marched in the thick dust and lain under shell fire and bombing from the air as they hugged rifle pits and charged machine-gun nests and spent the night in digging and putting out barbed wire, can realize the fullness and the sweetness of being free-limbed in hospital pyjamas, with nothing to do except to play a game of cards, or read the papers, or write to a girl they know at home; or realize the pride, the clear, patriotic conscience, of the wounded man who has fought bravely.

Of course it was written that the one thing that

the wounded wanted to do was to return to the front. They were pictured as being restrained from jumping up from their cots and rushing out to meet a barrage. The wounded are so pictured in all hospital accounts. It is the thing to write and for the wounded to say; and wounded men have a way of saying what they think you desire them to say—especially to kind nurses.

Much depends in this respect upon what is meant by the word "want." In my interpretation of it, very few soldiers *want* to go back into battle, not even in an army as young to war as ours was. They want to go home to the life of their family and friends. They would not be human if they took any other view. Yet, offer them the alternative of going home or of remaining until they have won the war, and that is putting the matter in another light. They had come to France to do a certain piece of work. It was a bloody, dusty, sweaty, unclean, disagreeable one and they proposed to finish it, which is really more credit to their intelligence and character and a surer guarantee of victory than to have them longing to charge machine guns as if it were a sport. Their knowledge of the nature of the war partly accounted for the fact that later when fresh troops were suddenly thrown into murderous fire, they were not demoralized by it as new troops are supposed to be. They knew what was coming. I speak both of officers and of men, who are of the same intrinsic nature.

We are a people given to discounting futures; and the average American soldier, to put it bluntly, discounted being killed in action. If our allies, whose

fortitude was sustained in a dark hour by the way that our men fought, could have probed what was in the mind of these Americans, they would have found still further reason for faith in our military strength.

XXII

DIVISIONS WITH THE ENGLISH

The great June disembarkation of our troops—The first of the National Army divisions—Truly a "melting-pot" division—Everyone had a warm place in his heart for the Seventy-seventh—The National Guard divisions of New York and Pennsylvania arrive—Also the "Wildcat" division—Regiments of tall men who could shoot and fight—The mountaineers and the pill-box—The Illinois and New Jersey divisions with the British—The Second Corps of two hundred and seventy thousand men with the British—What Britain stands for—Relations between Briton and Yankee—And between the Scotch, Canadians, Australians and the Yankee—On the British front.

By this time the A. E. F. was not only feeling the impulse of the mighty spirit and power of the nation at home behind us, but the living force of the divisions from the training camps arriving in the course of the great June troop movement. There was a new light in the eyes of every American in France; that of the confidence of rapidly increasing numbers. The pins which showed the location of each unit were pricking new holes in the map at G. H. Q. every day. Memory no longer kept track of the identity of the divisions which were already in France or on the sea.

A division was just another division except, if we retrogress a little to the period when the plans of the Abbéville agreement were first coming into fruition, that we all had a thrill with the news that

a National Army division, the Seventy-seventh (305th-308th regiments) from New York City, was in France. Everyone wanted a glimpse of the Seventy-seventh, not only because it was National Army but because it was truly a "melting-pot" division. Our British cousins could hardly recognize in its ranks the consanguinity expected in a division from a country speaking the same language, and they were to find that some of the men of the Seventy-seventh did not speak English except in a broken fashion. The size of the men, too, was a surprise, considering that they came from overseas. The little fellows from the tenements of the East Side hardly measured up to the physical standards set by the native Australians and the Canadians.

There was no division which included a greater variety of occupations—all there were in New York City. If you wanted a garment worker, a printer, a sign painter, a gunsmith, a wheelwright, a metal worker, a plumber, a cobbler, an artist, a poet, a cook who could do French pastry or corned beef and cabbage, a valet, a waiter or a butler, why, you had only to call on the Seventy-seventh. The one feature in which it was weak was in men who knew how to care for horses. Subway guards, lace-makers, cigar-makers and store clerks did not take to animal transport without a lot of training.

Everybody in the A. E. F. had an affection for the Seventy-seventh without ever having seen a single man of the division. The Seventy-seventh expressed a national idea. We wanted to see those little fellows from the tenements, who were bunking along with the sons from the apartments and the houses

uptown, make a fine showing. If they did, it would be the proof of the national idea carried into practice. With all their training, their physique was against them in carrying their heavy packs and digging trenches and enduring the inconceivable strain of battle action, which would make success all the more to their credit. At least, they ought not to be alarmed by shell fire after having survived New York traffic. England, too, had her little factory hands and cockneys, who were the product of their environment no less than the men of the Thirty-fifth (137th-140th regiments), former National Guard from Kansas and Missouri, under command of Major General William M. Wright, who were of the Canadian and Australian standard of height and chest measure. We knew what to expect from the Middle West, where fresh air and good food build up physique from childhood. These men had the basic strength of body, the pride of State and of self, which will always tell on the battlefield. You took them for granted. And wasn't Missouri General Pershing's own State?

The Twenty-seventh (105th-108th regiments) former National Guard from New York State, under Major General John J. O'Ryan, had men from my own county and town where I lived as a boy. How were they doing? Local pride was touched. Who has not some battalion in the army which he holds in the affection of a home guard? The men from the hills of western New York, particularly in the neighborhood of the watershed of Chautauqua which sends the rains in one direction to the Gulf and in the other to the St. Lawrence,

were bound to fight well. I had, too, an interest in the Twenty-eighth, formerly National Guard of Pennsylvania, as I was born in Pennsylvania such a long time ago that the sons of some of the boys of my time were soldiers now. The Twenty-seventh and Twenty-eighth were among the National Guard divisions which had taken their work very seriously before the war and which had been supported by their States, with the result that they thought that they were entitled to be as early in France as the Twenty-sixth. We shall hear much of the Twenty-eighth, which arrived before the Twenty-seventh, when we come to the fighting in the Marne salient.

The division which should have been most at home racially with the British was the Thirtieth (117th-120th regiments), commanded by Major General Edward M. Lewis, which came from the mountains of North and South Carolina and Tennessee. Ninety-five per cent of the men were pure Anglo-Saxon. No division is so truly American, if generations of ancestry on our soil counts for being American. There was no difficulty in finding men who knew horses or mules or corn-planting in their ranks; but if you sought tailors, electricians, lace-makers, butlers, brass workers or card-index experts, you had come to the wrong market. Tall and lean and corn fed—isn't that the proper phrase to use about them? When the King of England came to the British front they marshaled a company of the tallest as an example of American manhood, with impressive results. Could any country furnish a greater contrast than they made with the Seventy-seventh? And who would ever have thought two

years previously that both would be participating in this great excursion party to Europe?

You might depend upon it that the men of the Thirtieth could shoot, for hunting game had not died out in their home country. In their day some of them had had feuds; now, they had a common feud against the Huns. Silent and polite men, used to solitudes, thinking definitely and simply in old-fashioned terms of life and death, they were touched with the crusade spirit from their very origin more sentimentally and more intensely than dwellers in cities. Their interest in their surroundings centered in the crops and the farming in the flat country of the Ypres salient, which was a strange place for mountaineers to find themselves. They belonged in the Vosges for atmosphere's sake. Some of their words were Shakespearean and classic from inheritance, just as many words which the French Canadians use belong to the time of Molière, although I am not sure that "tote" is in this category. It sounded particularly applicable to carrying a pack.

The aeroplanes, whose hum the men of the Thirtieth heard overhead in the darkness, they named "night riders." I think that the concluding lines of a letter which one mountaineer wrote home deserve mention as a gem of sententiousness: "I must close now, mother. I've got to go out to kill a Hun. With love to father, Joe." It was the concrete purpose of his mission and of all our soldiers' missions in France, and he did not favor the involutions of the literary style of the late Henry James in approaching the delicate subject.

The mountaineers had a natural eye for ground,

and as they were used to being at large on the landscape, they took naturally to patrols. The incident of the pill-box, as it was told to me, was in keeping with their character. The machine gun in the pill-box across a wheat field in No Man's Land was very irritating to them the first time that they were in the trenches. An officer crawled out in the wheat field and studied the habits of the Germans day and night, then set forth with ten men on his enterprise, only to decide that two men would be enough and to send the rest back. He had found that the gunners were off guard every day at noon, evidently taking their luncheon. The three mountaineers sprang out of the wheat, rushed the pill-box at noon and threw bombs in at the entrance and through the firing aperture with perfectly satisfactory results. One never returned, but thereafter they heard nothing from the pill-box.

In all, ten divisions were to be trained with the British, including the Fourth, regular (47th, 39th, 58th and 59th regiments), under command of Major General John L. Hines. The Thirty-third (129th-132nd regiments), National Guard, from Illinois under command of Major General George Bell, Jr., had a battalion in the front line when the British counter-attack of August 8th began; and our men went ahead with their comrades, the Australians, taking machine-gun nests and prisoners and demonstrating that Illinois did not require months of trench warfare in order to develop a spirit of initiative when Illinois had brought initiative with them from home. I saw a battalion of the Seventy-eighth, National Army (309th-312th regiments), from New

Jersey, with replacements from western New York and Pennsylvania, known as the Lightning Division, under command of Major General James H. McRae, marching up to the trenches. They went singing "Keep down your head, you dirty Hun," with a spirit in keeping with their soldierly appearance. Some of the men from the Jersey water front were not of the fashionable height of the Thirtieth, but they were keeping up with others who were. The Eightieth (317th-320th regiments), also National Army, which was the Blue Ridge Division under Major General Adelbert Cronkhite, had something of the quality of the Thirtieth in lean and muscular bodies that are bred out of doors. These National Army divisions had a common character which seemed singularly national; and something about them carried the suggestion that now that they had arrived the United States was really in France.

We had organized Second Corps headquarters in the British area under command of Major General George W. Read, with officers who knew the French system of training and now were seeing the British system applied, their purpose being, of course, to connect up the two in an organization which would make the most of American characteristics. Some of these officers began broadening their *a's* after a time, quite unconsciously, and some were taking to afternoon tea, also unconsciously, perhaps. They were not using as many gestures as our officers who were with the French. Indeed, thanks to a common language, a good deal of energy was saved in this respect by training with the British, if you were to add up the sum for 270,000 men. All our equip-

ment, including rifles in place of our own which were stored, being British, we were quite essentially a part of the British army for the time being. Our divisions, which had been inculcated in the principles of trench warfare by Allied tutors in the camps at home, arrived to find that tactics had changed as the result of the March offensive, while General Pershing's message home in August, 1917, advocating open warfare drills, revealed him as a true prophet to the latest forces to come under his command.

The training with the British was in three phases: First, each division went through a period of instruction from a British division assigned to it. Then we went into the trenches, first with our men alternating individually with the British, then alternating by platoons and finally by battalions. The third would be such an experience as the destiny of battle provided. With the Fourth, the Twenty-eighth and the Seventy-seventh it was to be the Marne offensive, although it might have been the emergency which was mentioned in the Abbéville agreement, had there been another great German offensive against the British lines. The places where we were "to die in our tracks" were assigned to our different divisions as soon as they entered Phase B, in the elaborate support-line trenches which ran in deep traverses across the land for the whole length of the British front. The maps which German aviators made of these, showing firm and clear on the background of the fields, must have been enlightening to Ludendorff in considering the feasibility of driving the British army into the sea.

Recurring to the influences on *morale,* so strik-

ingly exhibited in our part in the resistance to the German Marne offensive, the sight of our troops behind the British lines meant more to the Briton in April, when the British were reorganizing from the terrific experience in the last days of March, and in May and June, when they were expecting another offensive, than an unemotional people could express.

All the English-speaking world had its soldiers in that area where British tenacity had saved the channel ports from giving Germany an Atlantic base. It was Britain which, early in the war, had reserves of capital and men; which gave of her money with the prodigality of her wealth and her stake in the war to the other Allies, trying to hold up Russia, sending coal and iron to Italy, nursing the little Allied nations, maintaining her forces in India, scattering her troops far and wide and holding the seas. When Britain counted her dead in nearly a million, when her gold had flowed abroad requiring that she must become a borrower, we came to play something of the part she had played as the banker of men and funds, energy and resources. Greeks, Poles, Italians, Hungarians, Bohemians, Jews were among our numbers fighting for the principles which had kept the British Isles an asylum for exiles. Britain might stand for an inheritance of blood to only a portion of us, but she did stand for a certain heritage throughout the world, if we except Ireland, that was above race to all of us. There were Irish, too, in our divisions, more men of Irish descent by far in the American army than in the British—which is something to think about. We had no Irish or Italian or Scotch, not even a German question at home.

We were as different from the British as climate, association and the melting-pot were bound to make us. For a Frenchman we would make allowances for differences in habits and customs, as we expected them to be different; but speaking the same language, the American and the Englishman sometimes take it for granted that we should be alike, and a ready medium for exchanging ideas only confirms the superficial differences. A man from Iowa might wonder why anybody who spoke the English language should have a Cockney accent or that of the miner from Cornwall; and the man of Whitechapel or Cornwall might wonder how any man could have the Iowa accent. How on earth could English soldiers, speaking our language, take tea for breakfast instead of coffee, and tea in the afternoon, and eat such quantities of cheese?

We are emotional and quick and most articulate; the Englishman is sentimental, phlegmatic and inarticulate. With the Englishman a certain amount of controversial "grousing," as he calls it, is a mental stimulus or pastime. The English privates, no less than the French, did not miss their opportunity of impressing our tenderfeet with a veteran's wisdom; and the way it expressed itself at the British front was characteristic of English humor. According to British soldier talk to our soldiers the Germans had about done for them. They told harrowing tales of retreat and might say very soberly that the thing to do when you saw the German coming was to run and then you might escape. The Yank was informed that if he did not have his head taken off by a shell when he went into the trenches he would be gassed.

The thing was to keep your helmet and your gas mask on and your legs free. In fact, this war had gone about far enough. Everybody was all in. And the longer the Yank listened to him the more the Englishman piled on the agony.

"All the matter with you is you've got cold feet!" the American who had come across the Atlantic to take Berlin might say; and the Briton might reply: "This is spring. You wait until winter. The shells bury you in the mud, which is like ice." If the American replied, "Come off! You can't get my goat!" there might be an end of the gloom, which the Englishman was secretly enjoying, after the phrase was interpreted; and the Englishman might say, grinningly: "You'll do, Yank." A good deal of interpreting of slang phrases was required. As one of our men said: "It's at the British front that you do need an interpreter. At the French front you gesture."

When the Englishman begins talking about being "all in" and magnifying the fighting qualities of the German it is a healthy sign. It means that he is awake to the situation. When he takes the contrary view and seems perfectly satisfied with his prowess he is in more danger of being caught napping. The careless way that the English had of speaking of their work deceived us a little at first; but later we learned that although an Englishman may not have our versatility, he knows his own job thoroughly. Our men admired the way the British looked after horses and kept up their transport and their guns, and liked their cleanliness and their reality when we came to know them better. After we had been in the

trenches with them and realized what they endured, we appreciated their stubborn and unyielding character.

The Canadians, who live only across the border from us, seemed like ourselves. Oversea cosmopolitanism put us immediately in touch with the Australasians, the true cosmopolitans among the Allies being the overseas troops. They have traveled. As for the Scotch, our men called them "sisters." We got on well with the Scotch. The burr of the man in kilts held every American soldier under a spell.

We learned much and saw much with the British. Whether or not the British learned anything new about the Yanks, which changed their previously conceived notions about us, is for them to say. They were surely surprised a little at our discipline. No European quite expected discipline of Americans; or that we had a general of Pershing's type on the list of our little regular army.

Our divisions which trained with the British had an experience which they will prize in the future as they recollect their European tour. Some of them had glimpses of England itself, and they like rural England particularly. They saw the Irish Sea and the British Channel, too. They were to know the British army as well as the French army; and it is the British front which gives you the most confined, the most concrete impression of war.

As a spectacle of shell-torn earth, calling up memories of hideous, concentrated strife, Verdun is perhaps still the classic example; but the Ypres salient gives the true impression of the ceaseless mill of war with no relief of the spectacular to the eye.

Where back of the line from north of Amiens to the Swiss border an hour or less than an hour takes you away from the external evidences of war, and the roads seem to stretch without end into a peaceful, thriving land, all the roads running back from the British front speak war clear to the crowded bases where the men and material of war are arriving. You are never quite away from the ambulances and the transport.

For four years the British had been imposing the machinery of war and the structures of war, building roads and railroads, upon that stretch between the battle line and the sea. A Channel crossing on a crowded leave boat only emphasized the same effect. The fighting ground for the defense of the Channel had grown much narrower since the March offensive. Amiens, the largest town in the British area, was deserted and under shell fire. Abbéville was congested beyond description, and the great main highway from Abbéville to Fruges had a continuous procession of traffic. On every hand there was ceaseless labor in preparing defenses. Those who know the British were not surprised that Ludendorff found these defenses too strong to attack, or at the results of the British offensive of August and September.

XXIII

OUR ARMY TRAVELS

Railroad trains everywhere full of Americans—Moving a circus a small affair compared to moving a division—Entraining a division—Business of conducting war is not all fighting—Varied accomplishments of a good lieutenant—Swearing of no use in modern armies—Loading kitchens and machine guns on flat cars—Departure of a troop train—Streams of young, vigorous American life flowing through France.

It happened that I was in the British sector when four of the divisions which had trained there were moving south. Two were to become a part of the new Paris group of American divisions ready for the defense of Paris and two were on their way to Alsace. We were surely a traveling army, our newly arrived divisions on the move from the ports and our older ones being switched back and forth as occasion demanded.

Whenever you saw a train stopping at a crossing you were surprised if there were not Americans on board, swinging their legs from the bottoms of box cars and sticking their heads out of windows. If they were fresh from home they very likely might be in campaign hats, which looked as odd to us now as the overseas caps to them. They were wide-eyed with curiosity at everything they saw. Their essays in French had the primer book stiffness and diffidence which made their enunciation indistinct even

when they had a vocabulary and a passable accent. If they had been long in France their journey was an old story. They called out to the people in colloquial French, learned by ear, with linguistic confidence; and the people laughed and talked back. If veterans met tenderfeet at a railroad station or anywhere else, why, veterans had their turn at "kidding" tenderfeet, but without the same effect as when persiflage came from the French and the British. You need not be as polite in talking to your own people as to Allies.

One day, when a trainload of Americans was passing a crossing, there was a yell from one of the soldiers standing by the gate and another from a man on the train. I heard shouts exchanged about father and Joe and Anna before I saw a brown face that was leaning out of a box car disappear around a curve. The two were brothers who had not met for a year. One was on his way to the Woevre and the other to Château-Thierry. They might not meet again for a year; and again, within a month they might be charging in regiments side by side.

When a division moved by train, all the twenty-seven thousand men, their rolling kitchens, their machine-gun carts, their water carts, their supply wagons, the artillery and its caissons and its horses must go on a series of trains and they must be fed on the way; and when they detrain they must be marched off as a complete unit into action or to their billets. I remember being impressed by an article in a magazine about the system of moving a circus from town to town by trains. A circus is a small affair compared to an American division;

but the French had been moving French divisions for three years and it is no more nor less than moving any other kind of traffic. French divisions were always going from quiet sectors to battle sectors and back again to quiet sectors. The French, who seem rather unsystematic from the lack of typewriters and card-index systems, are really most systematic, and accomplish order in their own way with their *bordereaux* and neat chirography in place of typewriting.

French military trains are uniform in composition, with thirty box cars and seventeen flat cars and one officers' coach and two cabooses, with the flat cars in the middle of the train. Given the number of trains of this kind required for a division and the right of way, and the rest is as simple as any other standardized operation. Entraining and detraining must become automatic, too, from experience, as it became with us after a while and promptly, considering that we were in a strange land and that the officers of each division had to proceed on written instructions until they had learned details which were second nature to officers of a veteran French division.

I have in mind a picture of the entraining of a division which serves to describe one of the most common of army operations in France. It is in the late afternoon before entraining begins, and all the division is still in its billets scattered over an area of six or seven square miles. There are the dozen pages of schedule sent out from division headquarters to show at what hour every unit is to move and where it will entrain. One officer for every village which we are to occupy as our new billets has gone

on a day ahead, in order that the unit occupying each village shall find its quarters already assigned when it arrives, which may be in the dead of night.

An entraining officer, detailed for each unit, must see that each unit is properly entrained and go with the last train carrying the unit. He must make a note of any damages to the train, such as broken doors or missing lanterns, in order that we may not be charged by the French government for breakage for which we are not responsible. This business of conducting war away from home is not all fighting. Any good lieutenant must be able to make a map, lead a charge, carry out endless inspections and be an accountant, a diplomatist, a disciplinarian, and never appear perplexed or the worse for wear.

Water carts must be filled, forage for the horses and wood for making coffee in the rolling kitchens must be provided; any sick must be evacuated before entraining, the local billeting requisitions signed and complaints of damage to property in the village looked after before departure; and twenty-four hours after detraining the name of every officer and man missing must be reported. For all the twenty-seven thousand men must be checked off. Some may miss the train. Soldiers have even been known to fall off the train, and to run out to buy a box of cigarettes when a train stopped and to return to find the train gone, leaving them stranded somewhere in France—which meant classification as casuals.

It would be easy to go into further details, as the regimental commander will tell you. His baggage packed, he is ready to say good-by to the house he has occupied for two nights as his home. He is as

used to change of quarters as commercial travelers are to changing hotels; and he has eaten and slept under the patronage of family portraits of grandfather and grandmother and the later generations, done in oil in old châteaux and in crayons in a farmhouse. One of his battalions is marching past the house on its way to the station and he looks out of the window lovingly at these, his men, whom he trains and leads. There is no love that man bears man which is like that of a colonel for his men, except that of a major for his battalion, a captain for his company and a lieutenant for his platoon. I have seen major generals slip away from the pressure of staff work for the relief and inspiration of watching their soldiers march past.

The colonel and his regiment are off into a new country. They do not know the town where they will stop or what they will do when they come to the town. He has plenty of time to catch up with his men and remains in his billet cleaning up "paper work." It is near midnight when he arrives at the station. Every important French station has a military platform along one of the sidings in the yards. It is flush with the car bottoms. If it were not, the loading of one military train would require the time that it now takes to load a score of trains and a great deal more than fifty times the language; for a whole division entrains with less language of the lightning variety than I have heard exploited by the old army teamsters in negotiating one slough with the regimental transport. That kind of thing, although it gives a picturesque atmosphere to narratives, is no longer in good form. Swearing may be

useful in small armies, but it has proved of no assistance to large armies in modern war.

One train is ready to depart and awaits the whistle. A sergeant who is still on the platform goes up to the Y. M. C. A. man who has established himself in a booth with chocolate and cigarettes for sale and asks, "Have you got a hatchet I can use for a minute?" That Y. M. C. A. man, who had been a college professor, says gently and politely, "No, I haven't a hatchet." The sergeant looks disappointed and even surprised. To his thinking, the "Y" was missing a bet in not having hatchets. The whistle blows and the sergeant jumps on board; and after that loaded train has gone, an empty one comes puffing in out of the darkness of the yards. Its passengers and freight are already on the platform. The horses are unhitched from the rolling kitchens, unharnessed and put in the box cars. After a few such experiences they make no protest. They become as used to entering box cars as stables and probably appreciate the rest which the journey means.

"Now, everybody hang his equipment on the fence and take off his blouse and roll up his sleeves," says a sergeant to his men.

"Roll your sleeves high enough and maybe you'll be a corporal," one man remarks.

"Anything might happen if I get ambitious," is the response. They are all cheery. They have learned the soldier spirit.

Sleeves rolled up, they pull down the sidings of the flat cars and begin pushing the kitchens on board. This is a process which is also carefully indicated in written instructions. One after another the kitchens

are navigated to their places. They will make coffee en route for the men, if the men do not get it at the coffee stations, and they will start cooking as soon as they are detrained, while they follow along the line of march. Or, it may be that it is the machine-gun carts that are to be loaded. The led horses of the machine-gun carts and the men who lead them, appearing now as dark silhouettes in the moonlight, always have the same attitude as if man and horse were of a piece; the man used to the stride of leading, the horse to being led. The gunners do not keep step when they follow along with their carts on the march. Their attitude is characteristic of an independent and mobile force at call, such as that of naval destroyers or the cavalry.

"We are the machine gunners," they seem to say. "We are coming along. Never mind playing your marching music for us. You'll want us, and we'll be there with our pepper boxes."

Or, it may be that it is the artillery which comes rolling up on the military platform with its manner of wheeled and mounted regality. The 75's are almost as easily put on board as the rolling kitchens, when gunners have learned the trick; and gunners are supposed to learn all tricks that concern wheels and horses. The 155's require more manipulation and more effort.

All the cars are loaded; the men have been counted off in groups as the allotment to each car is assigned; all the sidings of the flat cars are up and fast. Every man has a cooked ration and two days' travel rations. The officers, too, are in the passenger coach, where they intertwine legs with their baggage as they

stretch for the night. Two rows of horses' heads face each other in box cars, with their drivers occupying the intervening space. Upon the floors of the cars, which are altogether occupied by human passengers, the men have settled themselves. An occasional remark is heard above the hum of their talk. The smoke stacks of the rolling kitchens and the big guns lifting up their muzzles rise above the array of wheels on the flat cars. The whistle blows and another train moves out, and thus trains continue moving out from the entraining stations—usually there is more than one—until all the division has departed.

Each train seems to start with a kind of protest; and the note of the French engine and of the French cars with their light bodies and wheels is a baritone, I should say, compared to the roaring bass of our great trains at home. Speed is not a part of the plan, but system and dependability are most essential. There are stops at stations and on sidings and in tunnels and always time to count the telegraph poles, even the fence posts if there were many in France. On board trains our men wind in among the green heights of the spurs of the Alps, beside swift, whirling streams, along the banks of the Seine and the Marne, across the plains, all up and down France, seeing the streets of some villages close at hand and other villages as blots of red roofs in the distance; and off the trains, in scattered detachments, our men form communities, or, marching here and there, they are as streams of a young, vigorous life flowing through France to the battle line.

XXIV

BUSY DAYS FOR THE C.-IN-C.

Strenuous times caring for a million men—Difficulties of handling an untrained army three thousand miles away from home—Ability of General Pershing—His daily working hours from 7 A.M. to midnight—A general who looked like a general to his men—His aides—A dynamo of energy—A keen judge of men—Rarely overlooked or forgot anything—Never admitted impossibilities nor allowed pessimism—"Make it brief"—The "Pershing mentality"—A new sort of Americanism.

We had a million men in France. Where in the early days of the expedition we had been secretive about our numbers lest their publication discourage the Allies and encourage the Central Powers, Washington might now announce the round, ear-filling totals for the edification of Berlin as well as of Paris and London. If the million had been concentrated in one area, the problem of caring for them would have been gigantic enough. With fighting divisions scattered along the battle line, and divisions in training scattered back of the line, G.-4 of the General Staff and the S. O. S., which had to follow up divisions with supplies wherever they went, had little time to spare for reading light novels.

General Pershing, who had urged the sending of the million and still another and yet another million, in order the sooner to end the struggle, welcomed each addition to his family, while he was undaunted by the new burdens which they and the command in

the field of his trained forces actively engaged brought to his leadership. Other Allied commanders directed old and fully trained integral armies operating on familiar ground. They were in as immediate touch with their governments as General Pershing would be if his headquarters were only a few hours' distant from Washington by automobile. His isolation from home made his position unique in its manifold requirements. He had to iron out many wrinkles of controversy. Conferences with premiers as well as with generals called for his counsel; for it would be ridiculous to conceal the fact that when several great nations are in alliance, differences of conception in policy, if not innate difference in national interests, require negotiations in effecting understandings and harmony of action on many subjects.

Our general must see his troops, too, the newly arrived divisions as well as the divisions which were fighting. His insistence upon going under fire was a part with his desire for a close view of the work of his commanders and their troops. Officers who knew that there was something wrong with an organization and yet hesitated to impart their view to him, were amazed to find how soon he diagnosed the situation after a few minutes of personal observation. His long experience as a general officer, the thoroughness of his training as a soldier and his keen understanding of human nature were applied to those essentials which are immutable whether an army numbers ten thousand or a million men.

Even a fast automobile flying over the good roads of France cannot entirely eliminate time and dis-

tance. The amount of traveling and the amount of work he was able to do were amazing. The drive that he gave the A. E. F. was largely due to his own example of industry. From seven in the morning until after midnight, with the exception of his mealtimes, he was unceasing in his application. Yet he never seemed to be hurried, he never showed the signs of war fatigue which brought down many strong men. In any event, we were always certain, too, that the man at the top was keeping his head; and one took it for granted that his recreation must be in his occasional horseback rides and walks, and his time for reflection while he sat silently with his aide-de-camp in his long motor rides.

That is, he was never hurried, unless after a hard day in the office, he was away to the troops, when the eagerness for departure possessed him in a fashion that made him as young in spirit as when he was a lieutenant of cavalry. The soldiers knew that he was their general. He looked as a commander-in-chief ought to look, to their way of thinking; and this means a great deal to the men who bear the burden of pack and rifle and the brunt of battle.

As the pressure from his scattered and growing forces increased, no one person saw much of him except the members of his immediate personal staff and the indefatigable aide-de-camp who was always with him. In the early days he had foreseen the demands which would require the delegation of authority in the future. With the aid of Major General Harbord, his first Chief of Staff, he had built a machine which would automatically expand to meet the requirements of the million and the two mil-

lion men who were to come while he was left free to direct his army in action. Major General William McAndrew, who had established and directed the system of schools which were to be the guide of our army's tactics, came to take General Harbord's place as the general manager of the unprecedented organization; while General Harbord, after his command of a brigade and then of a division in the field, was given the task of commanding the S. O. S., which, with its giant problem of supplying the millions with their food and all that they needed for the spring offensive, was the second most responsible post in France.

Wherever the C.-in-C. went he always carried his book of graphics which kept him informed up to date of the exact numbers and stations of all our troops and the state of shipping and supplies, although his memory seemed to have these facts in call. Couriers overtook him at the day's end, wherever he was, with papers which required his decision; the telephone could reach him if something vital required immediate attention.

"The C.-in-C.'s here," the word was passed around when he returned to Headquarters from one of his trips. Well-known signs attested his presence. The only car with four stars on the windshield was in front of the main entrance to Headquarters; an orderly was at the little table in the hall beside the door which bore the name "General Pershing," and there were waiting major generals and brigadier generals in the anteroom.

But we also knew of the C.-in-C.'s presence by something electric that ran through all the offices;

the vitalizing impulse of the commander. "Another hectic day," as the Chief of Staff would say in the evening after the General's return. The General went about France distributing hectic days. A few words from him might set a chief of section a task that would start him on the rush for personnel and material to carry out some plan that would have looked enormous even to a celebrated captain of industry, or he might have his proposition turned down. Each chief of section came to the C.-in-C. with important papers to be signed; each chief was supposed to know the subjects which interested him at the time as they affected the general policy which the C.-in-C. had in mind. Sometimes he reached down through the channels of administration and took up a seemingly small problem which only he thought vital until later events proved its significance. It was he who said, "Stop!" or "Full speed ahead!"

There was enlightenment in studying the faces that came out of that office of offices of the A. E. F. The personal element was not missing. With "make good" the test for everyone, with ambition driving everyone to the utmost endeavor, with the desire for power and for approval always besieging the straight figure at the desk between two windows, who had the authority, which military concentration requires, of making and unmaking careers, he had only one thought, he could have only one, and that was to find the best agents to carry out his plans, by tests and by processes of elimination. He was deciding on more than the matter in hand; he was keeping watch of the human element. Was this subordinate

getting stale? Was he beginning to show nerves? Was he becoming greedy of authority for authority's sake?

A section or a departmental head might emerge from the office thinking, "The General does not understand. I couldn't get any action out of him at all. Talked about it and decided nothing, when——" To this officer's mind the fate of nations depended upon the immediate adoption of his suggestion. At the next session he might emerge thinking, "J. J. P. was quick on the trigger to-day. Approved everything! Now we fly!"

There were things that could wait, some things that if they waited would care for themselves, and other things that required instant action and more of it on a larger scale than the proposals had suggested. The man who had all the reins in his hand, all information at his command, alone knew where he was going and what he needed in order to reach his goal. When he intimated that he wanted a thing done and someone in the channels of administration, while not insubordinate, had a different view, reënforced by the thought that probably the busy C.-in-C. had forgotten his instructions, a telephone call might bring an officer in front of his desk to answer the question, "What about——? It hasn't been done yet."

To men working in compartments, who forgot that he had the key of inquiry into all compartments, it was surprising how much the C.-in-C. knew and sometimes how he managed to know it; so very surprising that it became embarrassing for certain officers. Subordinate chiefs might explain difficulties

to him, but they learned to beware of saying that a thing "can't be done." He would not admit that anything could not be done. They learned, too, that they must not bring any air of pessimism into his office, where his own supply of vitality for communication to others seemed inexhaustible.

Who at Headquarters and among the chiefs in the field has not seen his penciled notes with the bold initials "J. J. P." attached to papers? Subordinates who wrote the same kind of slips often had scrawling, illegible penmanship; his was as clear and firm as block letters, in keeping with the firm and chiseled lines of his features. He practiced his own text of "Make it brief," in whatever he had to say.

"Cut this down and we'll make it an order."—"A good idea! Have X. make a memorandum on it."—"Wait a while!"—"This reads well in theory, but it will not work out in practice."—"Go ahead!"—"Tell H. I want to see him to-morrow about this!"—"That will carry us on for the present."—"Use your judgment and plenty of it, quick!" "J. J. P." under the legible script, never hurried, never careless, was no less an order than "By Command of General Pershing" in full, official form.

Aside from the letters and orders dictated to his big, silent stenographer, who had been with him in Mexico, he wrote many by hand. When he had something of vital importance affecting policy he would often write that out by hand, too, and correct it and have it copied and correct it again, until it satisfied him. A cablegram to Washington did not need his signature for the reader to know that it was written by him. It was that of a man who

knew what he wanted to say and said it very surely and distinctly. Subordinate chiefs found, too, that he was not afraid to recognize his own mistakes, which possibly was one of the reasons why he kept growing with the growth of his task.

"You were right in that suggestion," he would say, or again, "I went ahead too strong on that." Again, a chief might be called into the office and hear something like this, "I was thinking last night——" and the C.-in-C. would state his idea, saying, "Think it over yourself and tell me how that strikes you." But always he was C.-in-C. Subordinates must not mistake orders for suggestions or suggestions for orders. The thing which held their loyalty with stronger bonds than those of his interest in men was that spontaneous human quality, lighted by the smile of interest in every man and breaking out in a laughing sally when something caught his sense of humor. The French spoke of the "Pershing mentality," which meant coming direct to the essentials of the subject in hand.

He took an interest in all the chaplains and the welfare workers, and in everything that pertained to the care of the soldiers. Subordinates each saw only one professional side of him; and, of course, the supreme side was the soldier preparing his army for action and directing it in action. Those who wondered about his reason for some decision suddenly grasped it when they understood that he was looking out across the country, away from the red tape of organization, which he had cut remorselessly, past the headquarters of commanders high and low to the men who were fighting, whose cour-

age, *morale* and skill were the vital human and military element.

A great army formed of recruits was under his personal influence. Before soldiers had been long in France they developed in their bearing and in the straight, level way that they met your glance that spirit which says, "I fight to win. I shall win!" and with that spirit a smile, a philosophic acceptance of what comes their way, an upstanding pride—a new sort of Americanism; that of the determination and enterprise of the individualism of the youth who means to get on in the world, and of the aimlessness of the youth who stands at the street corners with his hands in his pockets, amalgamated by discipline and example into a common purpose and character which would bring a nation into a new era.

Had our General done no more than train the army and built an organization for its direction, his place in history would be quite secure, without regard to how he was to use the weapon which he had forged and tempered and sharpened.

XXV

RESOLUTE STONEWALLING

Another German offensive in preparation—Three hundred thousand of our men near the Marne—The Rainbow Division again—Getting ready for the German onrush—The Germans as the irresistible movement, the Rainbows as the immovable object—The Germans stopped in their tracks in Champagne, and the Rainbows helped to do it—The bulldog tenacity of four companies of the Twenty-eighth Division—The Third Division at the Marne—A division that learned how to fight by fighting—The Germans cross the Marne—Our artillery makes the crossing difficult—A slaughter of boatloads of Germans by American riflemen—A railroad track that the Germans never crossed—The marvel of the 38th Regiment's defense—A German attack that was smashed.

As the days passed, with the Marne battle front stabilized, the daily intelligence reports of the German order of battle showed the increasing concentration of divisions for another offensive stroke. New ammunition dumps were appearing in front of the British and also in Champagne. The Germans might strike in either direction or in both.

This time they did not take the French by surprise. Several days before the attack all information indicated that it would be directed against the Allied line from east of Rheims to the region of Château-Thierry. On July 13th I heard quite definitely that the blow would come on July 15th, and this was correct. Units of American divisions were now to face the full power of the German army in an attack. Experts, who had not questioned our vigor in offen-

sive action, might wonder if we were yet hardened enough to withstand such an infernal artillery preparation and to repulse such masses of infantry under its support as had broken through Allied trench systems on March 21st and May 27th.

The part that we were to play, in sheer weight of numbers, during the fourth German offensive and in the counter-offensive which followed was significant of our growing power. Without counting freshly arrived divisions or divisions in reserve which could be summoned for emergency, we had on July 15th over three hundred thousand men either in sectors on the Marne front or in immediate support. The German had tested at Cantigny and Vaux and in Belleau Wood the mettle of our trained divisions; he was now to test the mettle of some which we did not regard as trained. His information gained about us at first hand upon July 15th must have forever dissipated his dream of forcing such a break in the Allied front that our numbers would be beaten in detail, owing to the want of cohesion and training in the arriving American divisions which were not yet organized as an army.

On July 15th, the Forty-second Division was in Champagne, near Perthes, with four and a half battalions in an intermediate position. The name of Perthes summons up recollections of the first two years of the war when it had been the synonym of bitter and continued fighting. All the region was battle scarred; it was associated with some memory of severe trench experiences in the minds of French veterans.

The Forty-second was not long out of the Baccarat

sector, where it maintained such a mastery over the enemy as became the Rainbow Division. Its artillery was well trained; its organization running smoothly; its *esprit de corps* unsurpassed. There was nothing a comparatively quiet sector,—aroused to activity by American initiative,—could afford which it had not endured, including heavy gassing and intense artillery preparations for enemy raids; but that is a different thing from having concentrated within a few hours more casualties than it had suffered in two months at Baccarat. The French Staff had looked the Forty-second over and believed in it enough to issue an order that if the enemy broke through in the Perthes sector, Major General Menoher of the Forty-second was to take command of both French and American infantry and artillery in the sector. Practically, then, the final defense would be with us, and we might consider for our edification the fact that each of the four German offensives had overwhelmed nearly all the front-line positions attacked. There is responsibility for you, Iowa, Ohio, New York, Alabama, California, Illinois, Maryland and all the other states represented in the Forty-second.

The Frankenstein of German prestige did not in the slightest depress the Rainbows. There had come to them the opportunity to play their part as the British and French played it in the first battle of Ypres, when there were no gas shells and artillery concentrations were comparatively mild. Have your gas masks ready. Every man in his place whether in a dugout or on the death watch—and let the Germans come!

Our Forty-second had taken its resolution. It was going to stick. It must, being the Forty-second. The men had reasoned out the situation, too. If they fell back, why it would be just as bad to be taken from behind by machine guns and shells as it would be to face them. This was a " dig-in " affair; and they dug hard and strengthened their parapets. It should never be said that the Rainbow Division had been routed. The dramatic element of time suspense, which men know before they go over the top, was in this instance that of waiting for the bomb that was sizzling at your feet to burst.

The German artillery preparation was thorough and deep. Every village in the back area, every cross roads and every road leading to the front were shelled. The Germans had not been gathering ammunition for weeks and working out their elaborate plans of attack with a view of neglecting any possible detail of destruction and interdiction. They were particularly prodigal with heavy shells which break in trench walls and dugouts. Paths and woods as well as battery positions were saturated with gas. German aeroplanes swept low, dropping bombs and raking roads with machine-gun fire. The orbit of every man's mind under this terrific shower of projectiles carried the one thought of doing what he was told until he was hit.

German confidence was set against our resolution. The Germans thought of themselves as the irresistible movement. We thought of ourselves as the immovable object. What the Germans had done they had good reason to think that they would do again. They must! There were their orders and their

marching schedule after their break through, which required them to be in Épernay and Châlons at given hours.

Only they did not know the difference between May 27th and July 15th. This time the Allies were ready for them; the enemy did not have the "jump" on us. We answered German artillery blasts with our artillery blasts. Our 75's were drumming out barrages into their advancing infantry. Our 155's were pounding their batteries, their roads, their supports. The hell on the morning of July 15th raged more fiercely than that of May 27th, because it was not one-sided. The Germans, filled with the idea of their invincibility, were repulsed only to come on again and again. Following their elastic system, the French fell back in places; and we, in our intermediate position, became no longer intermediate. One of our battalions broke six successive counter-attacks with steady rifle and machine-gun fire. Other companies were sent forward to assist those already engaged until we had five and a half companies where no brave man could be spared. Two of our companies and two French companies went over the top together against the Germans, driving them back on their reserves and scotching their initiative. Our guns had the satisfaction of firing pointblank at another time into the German infantry and artillery. The only point where the enemy ever penetrated our positions was in some woods into which he filtered his machine-gun units, but he did not reach our second line. When we had looked after other more pressing affairs we turned the attention of our guns and

machine guns to this quarter with the desired results.

What news! The Germans had been stopped in Champagne; and the Forty-second had helped the French in the achievement. Throughout the whole business, so far as I could learn, there was no flinching on the part of our men. Wounded artillerymen in their gas masks continued serving their guns; infantrymen, knocked down and bruised by shells, picked up their rifles again and continued firing. The busy ambulances went and came from their stations mindless of shell fire. Everybody seemed to have done his part in that grimmest and most trying of all battle experiences, in making a wall of human flesh and will against waves of an attacking infantry supported by all the storms of death that modern projectiles can offer.

The Forty-second had been on the left flank of the German attack. Americans were also engaged on the right on the Marne, where the Germans had maintained their lodgment across the river below Dormans. The outposts facing them on the morning of July 15th in that wooded and hilly region were four companies of the Twenty-eighth Division, which had had as yet no battle experience except that of Phase B with the British. German artillery preparation was no less thorough here than it was to the eastward. Troops in the outpost position of the men of the Twenty-eighth who were under French direction, are scarcely expected to hold under the bombardment which precedes the advance of infantry in a great offensive effort. They were only a handful, but they made a fight of it. They used their

rifles as best they could. Buffeted by shells, swept by enfilade machine-gun fire, some of them awaited their fate as they kept on firing; others, surrounded, cut their way out and took their wounded pickaback to prevent them from falling into German hands; others were left on the field wounded and dead; and a few were taken prisoners. They were not strong enough to stop the waves of Germans in their persistent advance; but their tenacity slackened and weakened the attack as a terrier dog may harass and delay a bull in a charge. Nothing more dramatic had happened in the annals of the A. E. F. thus far than the experience of these four companies.

The nature of what they had passed through was written on the faces of the survivors. When they fell back on the other units of the Twenty-eighth—which were waiting in the sector in support of the French under continuous shell fire to meet an emergency which never occurred—they brought no tales of an irresistible enemy, but one of confidence in themselves as soldier to soldier against the German now that they had met him. Their conduct inspirited the Twenty-eighth Division with the desire to meet the enemy on equal terms and pay him back in kind. One survivor standing erect with spatters of blood on his blouse, which had been ripped by a shell fragment, while his helmet had been dented by another fragment, said:

"There wasn't anybody left alive around me. I looked to the right and there were Germans; and to the left, and there were Germans. They had been slipping up through the woods and gullies. Well, I crawled back through a wheat field to a farm-

house. There was a woods back of that which made my getaway sure. Nobody was at home. Dawn was just breaking, and I went upstairs and looked out of the window and I saw some Germans working their way across the field in their green sunbonnet helmets. I had a shot at them. Then I waited for them to get up after they dropped to cover. And I got another shot. Well, I finished up my ammunition before I beat it, and they began shelling the farmhouse before I left. I guess they must have taken me for a platoon."

However, it is the Third Division, whose motorized machine-gun battalion had arrived in the nick of time to hold the bridge at Château-Thierry in the May offensive, which had the most to do with forever associating the river Marne with the history of our army. I may mention again how the Third had been hurried to the Marne without its artillery, after it was under orders to go into a quiet sector for its first tour in the trenches; how brief had been its period of training in France. Now its units, which had been interspersed with the French to meet immediate demands early in June, and also the regiments which had been sent across the river where we held both banks west of Château-Thierry, had been returned to the fold, and General Dickman had his division intact under his own command. Meanwhile, it had had an experience, which no service in an average trench sector could approximate, in all kinds of mobile work which developed responsibility and adaptability in the officers and submitted the men to a variety of tests which made them war-wise.

Some strangers had just joined the division. The

welcome which these newcomers in khaki and "tin hats," on jogging caissons and gun carriages, received was that due to long-lost brothers. They were strangers in the sense that this was the first time that they had been with their division. The artillery of the veteran First, Second, Twenty-sixth and Forty-second which had learned team play through months of progressive education, were living integral parts of divisional organisms. Fresh from its training ground, the artillery of the Third which had not yet fired any shots in anger, was called to support the infantry of the Third against the German offensive under peculiarly difficult tactical conditions. As a unit of the Third how could its artillery expect anything else! The Third was preëminently the division that was sent into action instead of the classroom to complete its education. It was self-educated in the school of battle. It learned how to fight by fighting, which it did very successfully, not in contradiction of the value of education, but in proof of how thorough had been the groundwork of our training-camp system.

The last battery of the Third's artillery to arrive was on the road just as the preparatory bombardment for the offensive was beginning. One of its guns was damaged by a shell before it could go into action. To have their piece put out of commission when they were about to use it for the first time on anything except practice targets, and this at the outset of a critical battle, was about as hard luck as could possibly happen to any gunners after months of training. It made the other gunners feel that they already had a personal score to settle with the

German. Even if they were strangers, they felt perfectly at home. They had their maps, and they only needed local instructions as to the points where they were to drop the shells, artillery fire being standardized and scientific. Besides, as novices, they had the advantage of receiving the more praise and a warmer welcome due to the acute demand for their presence. Two days later the artillery of the Third was veteran and accepted into full and affectionate membership by all hands.

Our outposts on July 14th covered the river banks in the neighborhood of the village of Mézy. In the adventurous business of sending patrols across the river at night in the preceding weeks, our men had had experiences much to the taste of adventurous young lieutenants and young soldiers. Crossings were prevented by enemy machine-gun fire on some occasions; again the scouts went some distance beyond the other bank, both without finding any Germans and with sharp personal encounters in the dark which yielded prisoners and information.

The Marne is not more than fifty yards across above Château-Thierry and the current is not rapid. Hills on both sides form the valley walls which slope down irregularly to the narrow stretches of alluvial bottoms. The railroad to Épernay follows the river's course. There is a bend in the river at Dormans, along the south bank where the Germans made their first crossing and one that amounts to a loop around the south bank east of Mézy. To the west of Mézy the river bears sharply south in a winding course which gives an advantage to an enemy who would effect a crossing from the north bank.

Naturally, the German would choose for his crossing points which would enable him to pinch any troops we had in the bends and to act effectually for flanking purposes in coöperation with his troops already established on the south bank across from Dormans.

The crossing in force must require particularly thorough and systematic artillery preparation; and the enemy's plans were characteristically elaborate and characteristically confident. He began his bombardment at midnight. He was prodigal of large calibers; he used prodigious quantities of gas in certain areas. Within ten minutes he had cut most of the communications with division headquarters; and soon all units were dependent upon wireless signals and runners for sending reports and orders.

This situation was not peculiar to the occasion; but common in the midst of resistance to a great attack. A general may not always know the exact position of his own pieces, let alone those of the enemy. By the time that the order which he sends as the result of a report arrives the situation may have entirely changed. Accurate observations in the darkness lighted by flashes from the shells is difficult, and even when gained the runner who carries the message and the runner who follows with it in duplicate may be killed. Runners in gas masks cannot usually find their way through gas saturated woods; and if they take off their masks they are gassed. The good news of an attack repulsed may not have reached headquarters before another attack has broken through.

Therefore, unit commanders must act upon gen-

eral instructions; and as the smaller the unit the closer its commander is to the enemy, the more intimately and murderously difficult his problem. He in turn is dependent upon his men. He can impose his will upon them while his superiors impose their will upon him only to a certain extent. Discipline, courage, coolness, initiative and thoroughness of training are the final factors in the test of results. Such a situation, one may repeat, is one of the objects of thorough artillery preparation which aims at the same time that it produces confusion in control, to kill all rifle and machine-gun fire in front. Orders, it is well to bear in mind, were to hold our positions of resistance at any cost. We shall see what happened.

The railroad which follows the course of the river passes through Mézy at a distance of from seventy-five to six hundred yards from the river. Our patrols covered the river bank at night and were withdrawn at dawn to their day positions. The Surmelin river empties into the Marne, where it curves sharply inward, to the east of Mézy; and the Le Rocq plateau, commanding the valley of the Surmelin, was the objective of the German attack. If he gained control of the valley the way was open for him to Montmirail and to the Montmirail-Meaux-Paris main highway.

The regiment which held this Mézy-Surmelin sector was to immortalize itself by a classic example of coolness, courage and tenacity. Its skill and care in the disposition of its forces in conjunction with the machine guns, in anticipation of the attack, made its remarkable defense possible. The bombardment which began at midnight was, of course, particu-

larly concentrated upon the forward positions. After three hours of barrage the Germans covered the river with a thick smoke screen as a cover for their crossing.

Already, our artillery had interfered with German plans. It had concentrated on the valleys and ravines which the Germans would probably use to approach the river from the north bank. This, of course, was the obvious thing to do. The point is that the results were singularly effective. Units marching in close order, and units assembled, awaiting the word to march, were caught in a furious storm which cut holes in the boats they were carrying and caused many casualties. A prisoner, who told of this interference with the schedule, said that it was a tragic surprise for the German troops who had been assured that they would cross the Marne with little opposition. Other shells burst in boats already afloat and left their passengers who were not killed to swim ashore. This reduction of the enemy's numbers was most fortunate as the Third Division had quite enough to do in dealing with the Germans who effected a crossing.

Our men realized the meaning of the smoke screen and also the intensified bombardment of their positions, which accompanied it with a view to keeping them to the cover of their rifle pits. They were too keen on getting a chance at a target not to expose themselves in the midst of the bursting shells. The place to stop the Germans was on the river. They were tacticians enough to appreciate this; and the preoccupation of the marksman possessed them. The smoke screen was thin enough in places to re-

veal masses of the crossing parties on the surface of the Marne. In the bend of the Marne at the mouth of the Surmelin not a German was able to land. Packed together, twenty men to a boat, the results at close range can be imagined. Boats capsized as dead and wounded men dropped over the gunwales, and survivors jumped overboard to save their lives into the water which was whipped by rifle and machine-gun fire.

It is estimated that in all twenty boats were sunk or sent drifting harmlessly down the stream; and all this because men who had been taught how to shoot, as General Pershing had insisted, had such confidence in their rifles that they exposed themselves contrary to German expectations. If they had not, their losses would have been the greater. According to the German notions, they ought to have hugged their rifle pits and surrendered when superior numbers, supported by the rolling barrage which was to precede the Germans after they had landed, charged them. By the time the barrage came, as our men had no charge to repel, they could take cover. The *liaison* of the Tenth and Thirty-sixth German divisions was the road running along the Surmelin river to the Surmelin valley; and, thus, this episode had broken the flanks of two divisions and their *liaison*.

Of course, other boat loads were crossing at the same time up and down the river; and the Germans were also building a light floating bridge from which our marksmen tumbled numbers into the water. Just to the east of Mézy, where the bend of the Marne makes the distance from the river to the railroad

track greater than at the mouth of the Surmelin, one of our platoons in the midst of shell fire and machine-gun fire fought to the death to prevent the landing. The 6th German Grenadiers, once they were on shore, charged toward the railroad track past Mézy. They met the second platoon on the railroad track, whose steel rails were the this-far-and-no-farther line of our resistance. There are no German graves on the south side of the railroad embankment. All there are American. There are many German graves in the north side, and scattered thick about the fields.

The platoon on the railroad track, under shell, machine-gun and *minenwerfer* fire, shot into the German masses, and then, the survivors welcomed close quarters which meant an end of everything but personal combat. It was bayonet and grenade, man to man, or, rather, one American against two or three Germans. The Americans were not going to yield that track alive; there is the simple fact of it.

A third platoon came to their assistance at a critical moment when those who were alive must soon succumb. The reënforcements took up the fight over the bodies of the dead while the wounded who could use a rifle or a grenade continued in action. The men of the second platoon, the report tells us, were all killed except three who were wounded; and half of those of the third were down before they had driven the Germans off the embankment. A fourth platoon then appeared, prepared to counter-attack. Upon its advance the Germans, who had fought out all their courage, may well have concluded that there was no limit to American reënforce-

ments or audacity, and they threw up their hands and cried "Kamerad!" There they were with the river at their back; and they knew by this time that their line on their left did not exist. The Germans who were to form their flank had never been able to land. Instead, our company on our right of the frontal attack, which had prevented a crossing on its front, was now giving those who had crossed and charged the embankment a withering cross fire. We actually took over four hundred prisoners between the railroad and the river, or nearly the equivalent of the total number of our two companies who gathered them in. In fact, the 6th German Grenadiers regiment was annihilated. There could be no better illustration of what courage and the offensive spirit will accomplish against German first-line troops. As for our men in the village of Mézy, they were of the same mettle. The Germans entered the village but could not budge us. Our men there were firing at the Germans in three directions at one time, without considering that retreat was in order; and they assisted in the annihilation of the 6th German Grenadiers.

Meanwhile this little battle had been proceeding in an area which the Germans were gradually surrounding by their infiltrating tactics. Where the Marne bends southward, west of Mézy, the Germans had effected their landing on a line to the rear of the railroad track which we were stubbornly holding. They swung in to the support of their broken line from Mézy past the mouth of the Surmelin. At the same time other Germans were swinging in from the east, where the troops in that sector had with-

drawn. The colonel of our regiment, which held the Surmelin valley entrance, had foreseen this, and he had dug trenches on his right flank and kept a company in battle formation every night to cover it, which was fortunate prevision. The Germans of the 5th Grenadier Regiment and the 147th Infantry, pressing forward in this direction, met the raking rifle fire and machine-gun fire from the trench which shattered their charge. Then our company counter-attacked the remnants and drove them back to Varennes road, thus disposing of their interference. On the other flank, the Germans reached Fossoy two miles to the southeast of Mézy. Immediately, the captain of the company, which had suffered such severe casualties on the railroad track, saw their deployment, he gathered the company cooks, the company clerk, his orderly and runners and other troops to the number of forty-two all told and helped beat off the attack.

Do you want any further explanation of why the Germans never reached the Surmelin valley? Or, why the German command never saw the signals it awaited announcing that its troops were well on their way to Montmirail by noon of July 15th in keeping with their schedule?

Colonel McAlexander of the 38th Infantry Regiment had orders to hold his positions, and he held his positions. If his men had broken they would have been surrounded and our whole system of defense would have been threatened. The marvel of the accomplishment of our 38th Regiment can be appreciated only by one who realizes the difficulty of securing information about what is

happening in the thick of battle and making your disposition fit emergencies. We acted upon the principle that if the Germans had us in flank we also had them in flank when we faced about and attacked them. But the deciding factor was the unflinching courage of our men and their aggressive spirit. This action is worthy of attention as exhibiting about all the requirements in officers and men that go to make military efficiency. It is a military classic.

Third Division headquarters might well have ordered a retreat to a second line of defense, and it might have received compliments for a skillful withdrawal in face of an overpowering attack; but it was confident that our artillery had worked havoc upon the enemy's bridges, boats and landing parties. It had faith in that regiment at the mouth of the valley and it had messages brought by runners through barrages that proved that its faith was well grounded.

I quote one written at 7:25 by the captain of a machine-gun company. There is no sign of stampede in face of the German army in his report. He was fighting as he was expected to fight and writing the kind of message, which by the criterion of his training, he was expected to write in a desperate situation. He starts out by saying that "the situation up here is improving; the infantry is still holding the line of the railroad," although "our right" has been "left in the air," and then continues:

"Have sent three guns on top of hill from spare guns. Captain Butler has sent four guns over. Understand infantry supports are going up to them. Men are doing fine. Have not heard from Lt.

Barber and his two forward guns. It is reported that he is captured. Rest of guns still fighting. The two forward guns at the bridge doing deadly work. Lt. McGuffen killed and Lt. Russell badly wounded. Captain Berri and Lt. Milligan of Co. C were killed. Have had about ten casualties among men. Captain Butler had two guns knocked out. Will advise you again as situation clears."

We were prepared for the method of German attack. At every point we had met his shrewd infiltration tactics with the proper response of accurate shooting and seizing the advantage of closing in on his advancing units as they moved forward. Other units of the division, which had not the dramatic opportunity of the 38th Regiment, carried out headquarters' plans by facing the enemy in clever tactical maneuvers, and with cries of "Let them come!" held their ground. It was gratifying to know that America had done her part in conjunction with the French, the British and the Italian forces which were engaged on July 15th; and the report of our taking over six hundred prisoners from the German attacking forces as we beat them back was not the least pleasant item of the *communiqué* which brought to an apprehensive world the word that the fifth German offensive was repulsed.

XXVI

WE STRIKE BACK

A defensive that had lasted four months—All hopes centered on arriving American divisions—General Pershing insists that it is time to prick the German bubble—His plan—Where we smashed the cup of victory in the German's face—Our First Division is ordered to advance five miles the first day, and to keep going—The Second Division arrives after short notice but on time—Marshaling the attacking troops in a rainy forest at night—Lost in the forest with danger of being late for the attack—Some units which had to go over the top out of breath from the rush to arrive in time.

THE Allied armies on the Western front had been almost as completely on the defensive for four months as if we were a besieged garrison. In spirit they had been on the defensive since Cambrai in the previous autumn. They had made some sorties, it is true; but with the single exception of the counter-attack on June 11th against the German offensive toward Compiègne they had made no extensive counter-attacks, let alone initial attacks. Although time was to justify the wisdom of allowing the enemy to become overconfident and to overextend himself—when the failure of any counter-offensive on our part might have meant the loss of a decisive action—the effect of this waiting to receive blows, this continual apprehension lest the next blow should succeed, this yielding of ground as the tribute paid for temporary security, must only confirm us in think-

ing in terms of the defensive while their apparent successes confirmed the Germans in thinking in terms of the offensive.

After the fourth offensive, which brought the enemy within forty miles of Paris, you might hear military discussions on whether or not Paris should be defended in the event of another German drive bringing it under the German guns. The preparations which the military authorities of Paris had made for any emergency were matters of common talk. We were ready to move our own army offices from Paris; the Red Cross and the Y. M. C. A. had arranged for trucks to remove their workers. Lay pessimists saw Paris as already lost; and military pessimists saw its military defenses as impracticable directly it was seriously threatened. All hopes centered on the arriving American divisions. If the Allies could stem the tide until August 1st, then we should outnumber the enemy; and when there were enough Americans and they were organized we might consider an offensive, which could hardly take place before spring. Thus, confidence in eventual victory rested entirely upon the Americans; and the spirit of initiative in our men was reflected in counsel by General Pershing in a manner which was to have an important influence in the operations that were to recover the offensive for the Allies in a single brilliant stroke.

There could be no firmer advocate of thorough training than General Pershing; yet no soldier ever believed in swift, hard aggressive blows more indomitably than he. He is not a man of halfway measures. Later, when German officers said that our

army was methodical in preparation and bold in action, it was merely an expression of simple, immutable military principles. The test of command is in their application; and, primarily, in the vision which sees, through surrounding detail, of when and how to apply them.

Any soldier of any age who looked at the German salient after the Marne offensive, could have had only one thought, and that was a drive at the base of the salient to close the mouth of the pocket. Yet one heard talk that salients no longer counted. Neither reports of German strength nor the defensive spirit of the time diverted General Pershing's attention from that inviting bulge in the German battle line. When Premier Clémenceau and General Foch came to American Headquarters June 22nd for a conference, he again pointed to its obvious vulnerability, and vigorously advocated an offensive. He had faith that the German strength was overestimated; and that under a determined attack the salient would crack like an egg shell.

But where were the troops for the operation? The events of the four years of war, which had placed such heavy responsibilities upon the French army, had made the French thrifty of their man-power. Although no sufficient strategic reserve for a counter-offensive existed, General Pershing suggested that there were divisions in rest which could be mobilized. Our untrained divisions could release other French divisions from quiet sectors. Our older divisions had already proved their mettle. We had others which might not be fully trained, but they would fight. They knew how to shoot; they had initiative.

Behind them were still other American divisions rapidly training and others arriving from America. The time had come to prick the bubble of the Marne salient. It was only a bubble, though it was German. Let the veteran French army attack with its old *élan* and the young American army attack by its side with the energy of its youth, and we should force the Germans to dance to our tune instead of our dancing to their tune.

The result of the German offensive of July 15th justified the General's premises and conclusions both in the repulse of the enemy and in the way which the Third and Fourth divisions and the French and British divisions had fought. All the Germans had gained was to deepen their pocket. They had put the point of their salient over a river in a bloody and unsuccessful effort. They were in reaction as the result of their failure; we were in reaction from our depression. It was the turning-point of psychology. Immediate advantage must be taken of the opportunity. The Germans had started a war of movement; we accepted the challenge at the moment that they were trembling and confused from the failure of their own initiative. We should not take the time for elaborate preparations which would reveal our point of attack; we should go in with the rush of Manoury's men in September, 1914, and along many of the same roads where he had struck von Kluck in flank.

How far away Manoury and von Kluck seem! How long it seems since I saw the French and the German dead in the Bois de Retz, where now our men were to go over the top; how long since I

went along that Paris-Soissons road to my first real view of the French army in action, where now American guards were to bring back long columns of German prisoners! With this Paris-Soissons road I associate the most exhilarating scenes of the war —the scenes of the repulse and the pursuit of the enemy in his two great efforts to win a decision in the West. There, on July 18th, we did not dash the cup of victory from his lips—we smashed it into splinters in his face.

General Foch who gave the word for the attack; and General Pétain who worked out the plans, both took General Pershing at his word. The Americans were to show how we could fight, with our two veteran divisions beside French divisions in the place of honor in the drive against the base of the salient toward Soissons. Surprise was essential; and this is best accomplished by rapidity of movement before the enemy's espionage service can communicate its information.

The First Division had been relieved from Cantigny on July 8th. After two months in the Montdidier sector it had a few days' rest in billets in the Beauvais neighborhood and again in the neighborhood of Dammartin on the way toward the Marne salient; and had received orders on July 15th to proceed to the Soissons sector under the Tenth French army—a movement that might have been only incidental to a stabilized battle line. On July 16th, the First reported to relieve one brigade of the Moroccan Division in front of Couevres. That night it scouted its positions. On the night of the 17th it went into line. It had moved rapidly, but not

under the pressure of sufficient haste to worry or excite anyone in this methodical division, which is never sensational even if it has the opportunity to be sensational. Its guns were up; everything was up. The First was ready.

When that veteran staff had the information that their objective on their first day would take them some five miles and that they were to keep right on going the second day and the third—well, this was what the First had been looking forward to for one year, two weeks and two days, or ever since it had arrived in France. Major General Bullard wished that he had not been promoted to command a corps until, at least, July 19th. His successor, Major General Charles P. Summerall, who had commanded the artillery of the First, was a lieutenant after General Bullard's own heart, as he had been after the heart of Captain Reilly on the march to Peking some eighteen years ago. Responsibility had developed character rapidly in this war; and General Summerall is Cromwellian in his downrightness and driving initiative and his devout, crusader's faith in his cause and his men.

All officers and soldiers who had been transferred to other divisions as instructors, when they heard the news, felt that they had been robbed of the supreme emotion of their lives. This was the last of the firsts for the First; it was simply to fight with all its strength, its courage, its speed, applying all its experience and all it had learned in school. Nothing new could happen to it hereafter unless it should be the first division to return home after the war. As you may have observed, all who

have been in France since the early days have an affection for the First, in the name of all that it went through, including drilling with the feet of some of the men done up in sacking for want of new shoes, in the blue print days of the blue print stage of the S. O. S.

On the right of the First was the famous Moroccan Division, including the Foreign Legion, which in brilliant action after brilliant action has written its name in blood which has turned to the gold of an immortal glory in the annals of the French army. It is an attack division; and it attacks as the tiger attacks, lithe and quick and cunning and fearless. Renewed again and again, officer and men recruits who take the place of the fallen seem to absorb their spirit. On the left of the First was one of the best of the regular French divisions.

Our Second Division (now commanded by Major General Harbord in place of Major General Bundy, who had been given a corps command) was to attack on the right of the Moroccans. It was to be precipitated into action with all the abruptness with which it had been thrown against the German offensive on June 1st. After its exhaustion and its severe casualties in a month of continuous fighting, which included the taking of Vaux and Belleau Wood, it had had two weeks in rest at Montrieul-aux-Lions, recuperating and reorganizing and drilling the replacements who had come to fill the gaps made by its dead and wounded and sick. It was not yet up to full strength when the order came on the night of July 16th for the infantry to embuss and for all horse-drawn and motor transport to

proceed overland to the region of the Bois de Retz. The Second had "got there" once in a hurry; and it was given another task in keeping with its reputation. It did not know just what was expected of it; but French officers were to give its commanders further orders at the debussing points. Owing to the stress of a rapid concentration and the secrecy involved, the infantry units had tiresome and exasperating marching and countermarching after debussing.

Not until 4 P.M. on the afternoon of July 17th, with the attack set for 5:35 on the morning of the 18th, were the plans for the attack drawn up and instructions given to the artillery and infantry commanders. The infantry was to go over the top from the line through the eastern portion of the Bois de Retz, an immense thick forest which had seen fierce work during the battle of the Marne. As fast as detachments arrived they were to be hurried into the forest, as pronounced movements in the open must be avoided by daylight in order to escape aerial observation. When night came all the units were not yet assembled. The commanders must take them through the forest and put them in position before the zero hour for this most important and critical action. There are few roads in the forest. They were a rumbling jam of pressing and varied transport, with the guns and ammunition and the machine guns on the front demanding right of way. Rain began to fall. This intensified the darkness of the woods under the overhanging tree tops. Within the woods a man was not visible at a distance of a pace.

Commanding officers had to scout the line in the midst of the forest in this inky, drizzling night. Having marked out their sectors, they had to put their commands in position in order that their front line should attack in proper order and the supports and reserves should follow in theirs, which was in suggestive contrast with previous experience of having one night for reconnaissance and the next for "going over." Non-commissioned officers were stationed along the routes as guides. Troops in threading their way past and around that weaving, straining mass of transports with its blocks, stumbled into sloughs, bumped into wheels and mules and found themselves off the road colliding with trees. It was a groping blindman's-buff kind of business. Units were cut in two by an ammunition caisson or an ambulance broken down off the road. The portion that was ahead went on; the portion that was stopped had to wait. How were lieutenants to keep their platoons together, or captains their companies together, let alone majors keep their battalions together? How were they to follow the instructions of the non-commissioned officer guides who were themselves confused?

Regimental commanders at their stations forward began hearing all kinds of rumors telling how their men were wandering about lost in the woods in small groups without even compass direction. At four o'clock the battalions which were to lead the attack had not appeared. Reports said that they were too far in the rear ever to arrive in time. The French *liaison* officers and those commanding the thin line of exhausted French troops who were to be relieved

were seriously alarmed. It was too late to countermand the order for the attack. There was danger of the line, which knew what opposition it might encounter in this vital effort, having a fatal gap which would compromise the whole movement and change any prospect of success into almost certain failure—with the Second Division receiving the blame.

The French sent out all their runners as guides; regimental commanders themselves as well as aides rushed back to hurry our men forward. They disregarded the identity of a unit or its order of battle in their vigorous urging. The situation was none the happier because we had to go through a stretch of woods in the first lap of our advance, which even with the most careful preparation, when platoon commanders have maps and have scouted the ground, is a difficult undertaking. But we must "get there." We must go over the top.

The rush to catch the last launch out to the steamer was nothing compared to the hectic rush in that dense forest and dense darkness in the counted minutes of that half-hour whose suspense was the more harrowing, considering the risk of an undertaking in which everything had been subordinated to the element of surprise. We had planned to go the German one better in open warfare. He had always preceded his offensives by artillery preparation, which we were now to forego. By past standards of elaborate jumping-off trenches, arduous assembling of material, deliberate plans of infinite detail, and thorough registering of guns on targets, the attack of July 18th should have been annihilated.

But this kind of prevision informed the enemy of what he was to expect and where he was to expect it. The division artillery which was hurried into position was not to send over a single shell before the infantry advanced. Gunners were shown their programme on the maps; and they were to fire by the map at 4:35. And the men of the Second "got there." When the artillery started its rolling barrage with a crash at 4:35, the light of the bursting shells illumined the way for some units which had come up on the run. They recovered their breath as they proceeded "over the top" in the more deliberate pace of the advance.

And now? Did the enemy know or did he not know that we were coming? He must have realized that the logical point of attack against his salient was toward Soissons. The regimental commanders who had started their troops off in such confusion and haste after they had been all night on their feet might well be fearful of the result; and the feeling of relief when these commanders found that their commands were keeping up with the commands on their flanks, and when prisoners began to appear and our walking wounded said that "Everything was going fine," had grateful reference to providential dispensations which are not taken into account by practical soldiers.

XXVII

DRIVING TOWARD SOISSONS

Heroic tanks—The Germans taken completely by surprise—Champions of all the Allies—The Frenchman by nature an offensive soldier—Friendly rivalry of French divisions with American divisions—An attack where speed was everything—Our first captured guns—A battalion caught in a cave—"Forward, the guns!"—Wounded and prisoners—American chaff for German captives—Poor specimens of the German army—An attack that startled the German High Command—When night came—Men who *wanted* to go on—The hottest action our army had had since the Civil War—A headquarters and a dressing station in one house—"Where did you get it, Buddy?"—Polish prisoners.

THE brief official reports and the map with broad blue lines showing the sectors of our divisions' advance are very cold and official compared to the vision which personal glimpses of the action of July 18th and the following days summon of the sweep of our men across the plateau toward Soissons. Broken by ravines and by villages the stretch of the plateau was comparatively excellent ground for a rapid offensive movement.

When the sorely hurried Second came out of the wood, it found that it was up with the divisions on its right and left. The whole line was advancing without any interruption by the relatively light response of the German guns. Our own rolling barrage could not be as close protection as usual; for our gunners might not "cut it too fine" when they had had no registration. Therefore, the Germans

had more time, between the passing of the barrage and the arrival of our infantry, to spring out of their dugouts and pits and man their machine guns. With the accompanying tanks nosing about to look after such details, our early progress was little delayed by machine-gun nests in bushes or farmhouses. It is difficult to think of such creaking, racking, ungainly mechanisms as tanks being heroic; but they are as heroic to many an infantryman as any knight in armor who ever came to the aid of a foot soldier in distress.

At the end of the first hour all the divisions were on the blue line running across the lines of advance which was the first objective. Three objectives were set for the first day. Others would doubtless be set for the next day if these were taken. The great thing to the men was that they were not to stop here and dig trenches as they had been obliged to do in the Cantigny offensive; but were to continue advancing until casualties called a halt.

The soldier who falls from the splinter of a stray shell or from a sniper's bullet in mucky trenches serves his country equally well as in an attack, only there is no evident reward for his sacrifice. Who, if he must risk death, would not prefer to risk it in a charge when every step taken means the reward of ground gained? At the end of that first hour our men had their stride. They were feeling the very joy, the very exultation of battle, and a confidence born of the swiftness of their advance.

We had taken the Germans completely by surprise. We had outwitted the German Staff; and every French and American soldier with their quick

intelligence knew that we had. The German trenches were scratches in the earth beside the strong defenses on the Somme, in the Ypres salient, or in Champagne. They had held to the new system of open warfare, evidently convinced that they would be soon moving on; or if we attacked, that machine-gun nests would soon stay our advance.

Chips before a tidal wave, the Germans in the front line held up their hands in blank astonishment and demoralization. Troops in dugouts in the second line who were to rally in support in the elastic defensive system were hardly elastic enough on this occasion. They were asleep when the earth trembled and the crackling reports of shells broke in a storm on a tranquil summer's morning. On other occasions, German soldiers had gone to their positions in the midst of a bombardment of high explosives and fired through the rolling barrage, taking cover when the barrage arrived and rushing out again to meet the infantry advancing behind it. But here was an attack without any previous artillery preparation, which was not according to the rules.

"I guess the Hun saw we meant business this time," as one of our soldiers remarked. We had numbers, and supported by tanks, we moved with a systematic ardor of purpose which must have appeared most forbidding to an enemy who put his head out of a dugout and had to make up his mind whether he would be taken prisoner or die in his tracks. It is easy to talk about dying in your tracks, but hardly appealing when you are wakened out of a sound sleep in the chill morning air to resist guns and infantry which are perfectly wide-awake.

All impatience from the months of stalling, all the misery of having to keep on the defensive, all the longing for the day when we should rush our opponent with a rain of blows were in the released spring which precipitated us into the attack. Youthful skill of America and veteran skill of France would not be denied. In the old days, opposing groups of primitive combatants used to choose champions who would decide the issue of battle in personal combat. The First and Second divisions and the French divisions with whom they fought, were in something the same way the champions of all the divisions of the Allies from Flanders to the Adriatic and of every man, woman and child of the Allied countries. Accordingly as these chosen soldiers fought and as they succeeded, the Allied world would feel the next day.

The veteran French were in the kind of action for which they are peculiarly fitted. By nature, the Frenchman is an offensive soldier. We all know how uneasily the early days of trench warfare sat upon his spirit. He had to accommodate himself to it; and amazed the world by his fortitude. Movement suits his nature. He is fluid and quick in attack. There is mercury in him. This drive, without any previous artillery preparation was characteristic of his natural daring and facility in swift maneuver. He was doing the thing which was in his character; his old confidence in himself and his method had returned.

With the Americans back of him in millions, with the Americans fighting at his side, he was no longer under the necessity of extreme caution in safeguard-

ing his own reserves; he had a bank account which permitted the hazard which he loves in battle. We brought to him the impulse of our youth. He had heard of our pantherish rush, our "punch" and our "pep"; and he would give us an example of French *élan*. In the second Marne offensive the gleam that was in his eye in the first Marne offensive had come flashing back. Should French veterans allow the novices from America to outstrip them in their own peculiar forte? Should our vigor in its first great offensive admit that it could not keep up with any army on earth? Rivalry of French divisions with American divisions and between French divisions and between American divisions was another spur to effort in the well-conceived plan of the drive toward Soissons, which was to be as brilliant in execution as in conception.

In all accounts of offensives you read of this or that unit being "held up" by machine-gun fire from some strong point. Until this is cleared the line on either side cannot advance, as it is caught in enfilade. The result is that the unit which finds its flanks exposed as it pushes on when resistance is slight, is impatient, and sometimes thinks that the adjoining unit is not doing its part. We went forward in the usual waves followed by columns, that is, literally with one hand up in guard and the other ready to strike a quick blow. When a center resistance is developed the wave halts, taking what cover it can find, while the columns come up to its support in such a manner as the situation requires. They may be able to take care of the situation immediately with the help of rifle grenades; or trench mortars may

have to be brought up; or, in the last event, which means delay, an artillery concentration is requested. On July 18th we had the bit in our teeth. We did not bother with too nice details. We charged the machine guns because we found that the machine gunners in the early stage of the battle yielded; and we took the captured machine guns along with us to fight duels with other German machine guns.

Time and speed were everything in making the most of the surprise. Every hour we allowed the enemy in which to recover his equilibrium and his spirit and collect reënforcements meant heavier losses later on, if we were too long over a strong point. Each battalion, company, or platoon commander was under the whip of a single purpose; he must keep up. His unit must not delay progress. Battalion and regimental commanders exposed themselves in the preoccupation of their work. Success fed our intrepidity. "Keep pushing while things are going our way!" We were bunching hits when the pitcher was rattled. We had the "jump," and we must keep it. "Shelling out" prisoners from their dugouts became a competitive sport. The more prisoners you took the more you wanted to take.

I was wrong in saying that the First Division was through with its firsts. The First took its first guns on July 18th. It is captured cannon which ever have been the visible, convincing trophies of victory, and particularly so since standards are not carried in battle. "Through to the guns!" had really been the point of Ludendorff's orders for his offensives. We applied his tactics to his own artillery. Perspir-

ing, radiant, triumphant, our men found themselves in possession of a nest of batteries of German 77-mm. and 150-mm. guns, in Missy ravine. These deserted pieces, now only so much harmless steel, as well as the guns whose surviving gunners surrendered, had yielded to the infantry which had borne their hateful long-range blows. It was like coming up under the long-arm reach of an adversary with an uppercut in close-in fighting.

We gathered in prisoners by ones and twos in ditches and in houses, in groups and companies from villages and dugouts and in one instance by battalion. The first wave of a battalion of the First had gone past a stone quarry, knitting its course forward and preoccupied with clearing the way. The mopping up parties developed some fire from the quarry. They soon silenced it and saw Germans rushing into an opening which proved to be the mouth of a cave. The usual procedure followed. "Will you surrender or be bombed out?" A soldier appeared in response to the invitation with a note from the commanding officer within offering to surrender the garrison; and some five hundred men were marched out, their officers looking very sheepish and the men with wondering smiles which sought to placate their captors at the same time that they were significantly concerned about their fate. Their apprehension soon passed. They were not to be massacred by these savage Americans, who were grinning at them and telling them to move along to the rear.

The scene across the fields which we had gained was hardly new in the war; but it was new to us. There had been small reason for concealing our

movements once the attack was begun. The men in front who were mowing their way toward Soissons wanted ammunition, ambulances, communications and food—everything that an army in movement requires. The signal corps people were reeling out their wires to keep advancing battalion and regimental headquarters in touch with division headquarters. To every officer in charge of any kind of a train his was the supremely important task of the hour. Someone up ahead was relying on him. He must be at the front; he wanted to be at the front; but no one could deny the right of way to the artillery and its caissons and to the ammunition trucks. The fighters might go hungry, but they would not want for artillery support or for cartridges.

"Forward, the guns!" had become once more the thrilling watchword of action. No bother about keeping the cover of roads or orchards now; never mind the camouflage; unlimber in the open, pressing close up behind the infantry! Fields back of the German lines, which had been tranquil for weeks except for the bursting of Allied shells, were still dew-moist when the wheels of our 75's ran tracks across them, and soon they were thick with 75's in a clamoring raucous chorus of blasts. It was the kind of thing for which the 75's were intended. The delight of the French gunners was as the genius of a nation of gunners in full triumphant flame. Americans have snap if they have not *élan;* and our gunners for the first time were knowing the exhilaration of pursuit with the guns, of urging horses forward, of swinging into position, of every trained man nimble and knowing his part, of beginning

to fire before the horses were hardly away from the guns.

"We are with you! We'll stick close to you!" was the message of the guns to the infantry.

All the roads from the forest of Retz were debouching their streams of traffic which broke free from the roads where the ground was solid in the open. Our walking wounded were coming across the fields to the dressing station. They came with heads up and something new in their bearing which broke into smiles and flashed from the eyes—victory in open battle! The wounded who could not walk came in trucks, even on caissons, when there were no ambulances. This attack had been so sudden and the desire for secrecy so intense in limiting the orders to combat troops that in the mixture of Americans and French in the same action, there had been some misunderstanding about hospitalization, which, even more than with the British, is with us important to the point of captiousness. There was no room on the roads for the ambulances which we had; and the minds that had conceived that vital operation held that bullets and shells to press the advance to success by killing the enemy's fire were the best way to save lives, not alone on that day, but in all the future of the war, which was to be influenced by the decision of that day. At Saint Mihiel later, when casualties were incredibly light, miles of automobiles banked along the road never had to move from their places.

Wounded who waited long in dressing stations, who took passage in empty trucks, forgot their pain in the common exultation and in sight of the prisoners, who, after coming across the fields in groups,

were mobilized and sent on in gray columns under smiling guards. It is the appearance of guards with a line of prisoners, or the "breaching" of a dugout by a soldier who appears in the doorway with bombs, which, as a rule, leads to the stories about one man taking anywhere from a score to three score of Germans. Of course, one man at the door of a dugout with a battalion back of him owns the premises and the Germans inside, but we must not characterize him as taking a German company single-handed.

There was certainly something appealing and satisfying in the sight of a hundred soldiers of the Kaiser led by an American with a rifle over his shoulder, with three or four Americans keeping the column in line and one American bringing up the rear. If the guard marching ahead happened to be a little Italian from the East Side of New York, it heightened the effect; and you may be sure that the smaller the guard the more blissfully conscious he was of the tactical advantage of his position.

The prisoners, if you excepted the officers and the hard-faced Prussian non-commissioned officers, seemed disinclined to bring any lugubriousness into a scene of celebration. They actually seemed to be enjoying the "party." It was a novel experience for them in more ways than one. No familiar, harsh guttural explosive commands directed their movements. They were signaled to fall in and move along much as a policeman directs traffic. This easy and good-natured treatment from our officers and non-coms was all the more puzzling, considering that we had given them such a fierce shock of surprise,

and it added to the wonder of all that they were seeing as safe spectators within the lines of their enemy. Without their arms, no longer marching stiffly, many stoop-shouldered, many of middle age, many merely boys, these indifferent German troops aroused your curiosity as to how they could have forced the whole world into the struggle to keep them from conquering Europe. The answer is they were out of the machine; and it was the machine that made them strong. You were certain that no such transition was possible in a captured Frenchman, Englishman, or American! The transport drivers and any passing troops all called their greetings to the prisoners according to each man's sense of humor.

"Is this the whole German army?"

"You're on the road to Paris?"

"What will Kaiser Bill say to you?"

"Cheer up! We've only begun! You'll have enough company before we're through with this job!"

"Why, Hans, you don't know how the Kaiser will miss you!"

The calls were tart, but never insulting; and frequently they brought grins from the Germans. Frequently, too, our calls were in German; for it is surprising how many Americans know a few words of German. I have in mind two remarks that I heard in the course of the battle. One expressed a common thought among our men. "No bunch like that can lick us!" said a stalwart American as he looked over a passing column of Germans. The other, which has been frequently quoted, was from

a German officer, a hard-fighting professional type who had emptied his pistol before being taken. He looked over a group of his soldiers, which included in the foreground a narrow-chested, studious-looking youth in glasses and a short bow-legged man of forty-five years. Meanwhile, in the contrast of their youthful vigor, a company of our men in reserve were moving up to the front.

"We have old men and boys," he said, "who have fought for four years, against your youth which is as fresh as we were in the beginning. I'd like to have had the men who marched through Belgium with me, this morning. It would not have been as easy for you. You are too young, too lusty, too swift. We can't do it!"

He spoke judicially; it was a professional opinion with the touch of bitterness that after four years of fighting, a people whom he had considered wholly unmilitary, a democratic mob, had sent soldiers across the sea whose dramatic attack had overwhelmed his veterans. It was hard for him to be philosophical. In his heart he was bitterly shamed.

From the moment that our artillery had broken the morning's silence, German commanders knew that a great attack had begun. They probably relied upon their troops in front to stay its progress, but it came on like the roar of a surf carried forward by a neap tide of unwonted force and speed. Our strategic purpose must have been instantly clear to each German headquarters as the wires carried the messages on into the presence of Ludendorff, who on that day received the word that his confidence had overshot itself with the madness that had been

provided for many other gods in history before the day of reckoning came. He had defied military principles in the salient; and after six weeks of waiting, in which he had been further confirmed in his audacity, we had struck back suddenly and overwhelmingly at the obvious point. We must be stopped; and the pressure from the other side of the salient at Rheims must be stopped. The will of the High Command must be imposed upon faltering units already in position; machine-gun units rushed to their assistance; fresh divisions called for the desperate defensive from the reserves mobilized for the offensive.

By 6:30 the Second Division, going with the impetus of its rush over the top, had reached its second objective. By 9:30 it was on the crest overlooking the village of Vierzy, a distance of five miles from its starting-point. The right of the First was up to its second objective after having to pass through some difficult defenses, and the left was engaged in Missy ravine, where it received its first real check.

When you see this ravine cut into the plain, you recognize how nature devised it as a hiding-place for artillery and for close-quarters defense by bombers, snipers and machine guns, which the Germans know how to use to the utmost when courage supports their tactical skill. Its mouth was about midway of the First's sector of advance, and broadening and deepening, ran through that of the French division on the left flank of the First. Signs of the struggle and why it was fierce, though not why its result could have been so swift—that was in the spirit of the French and the American fighters—

were visible for weeks afterward. Here, the Germans had had time to recover from the surprise that had overwhelmed their frontal resistance; here, they stiffened and set their teeth and were hurriedly reenforced by units from the rear and by orders that gave them no discretion except resistance to the death. They were fighting, too, to save thirty guns; and they fought bitterly, firing until the gleam of the bayonet signaled that they had fought their last fight.

By 6 P.M. the Second Division had entered but had not taken Vierzy, where the Germans had also stiffened, but otherwise it was in possession of its third objective. The 2nd Brigade of the First had the ravine, which was the line of the second objective, but it was held up by machine-gun fire from the north and northeast in portions of the ravine still unconquered, and from other strong points in the very difficult ground outside of its sector; while the 1st Brigade, which had open ground, had advanced to the third objective with its left flank toward the 2nd "refused," which required that the 2nd should press hard the next morning if the advance were continued. There was no doubt that it would be continued. General Mangin was the army commander. He believed in the attack. This colonial soldier, with five wound stripes won in colonial wars, before the great war, had risen from a colonel through that principle of *Toujours l'attaque!* which he applied with a resolute skill; and, in our troops, he found the quality that was the proper weapon of his system.

With the fall of darkness the traffic on the roads seemed to increase, although by day this had ap-

peared impossible and perhaps it was only the darkness that gave the impression. German aeroplanes sought their targets with some telling results, although, considering the amount of bombs dropped, there were marvelously few casualties to men, animals and transports. Anyone who tried to breast that pressing tide which halted only to press on again, if he were in a car, gave up the attempt. He turned and went on with the tide toward the front, held as fast as a cleat to a moving platform. The batteries, which had been barking on the plain, were shadowy outlines of riders astride horses, of men on guns and caissons as they moved forward to new positions.

Ammunition and still more ammunition, and food and water must go forward close to the lines in range of bullets as well as of shells, before morning broke. The engineers had their orders for material, their details to send forward to make defenses. They work all day and night, the engineers; and are called in to help fight, these soldiers of rifle and spade, whom we associate with bridge building. New dressing stations, new stations of all kinds, must be established; all the divisions' organization, concentrated on a narrow front, must go forward, each part finding its place in the night. Only the infantry which had been fighting was supposed to lie down after it had dug in, and the gunners also when they might find time.

There could be no rest for commanding officers. They must report at the command posts of their superiors the situation of their command, its losses in men and officers, its exact disposition and its

morale. The reference to *morale* was always the same. The men wanted to go on; that was all. We had already won enough ground to make the operation a success. It had been a great day in France, one of the greatest days even in her military history. But no one was thinking of that in the preoccupation of his work. Everybody thought of the morrow's work.

Commanding officers had to assist in the business of coördinating the movement of supplies to their destinations; and then return to the front to give the orders and make the arrangements for attack and to push forward their command posts for the morrow. Keep pushing—that was the spirit of the fight as it had been of the day, which General Harbord exemplified in removing his headquarters to Beaurepaire Farm. He was in the cellar with his staff, under a flooring in that exposed target in the middle of an expanse of fields, which even a 77 shell would have pierced. He was sitting at a table which had been used by a German battalion commander who had occupied the dugout only that morning. In another room the cup of tea that a first lieutenant had left undrunk when our artillery opened fire that morning was undisturbed beside some biscuits; and there were copies of the Cologne *Gazette* and a book about the Kaiser as King and Man, idealizing him as the exponent of Kultur which was to be spread throughout the world by his army. If the lieutenant misses the book in his new quarters as a prisoner we shall allow him to read President Wilson's speech in its place.

Major General Harbord was conducting opera-

tions in the midst of the hottest action that our army had had since the Civil War in the same quiet way that he had acted as Chief of Staff; with decisions about movement of troops as prompt as when he was looking after routine papers that crossed his desk at G. H. Q. In going downstairs to see him you had to step over a wounded soldier, who half awoke from his sleep if you were noisy. The soldier was quite comfortable there on the floor; as he was used to sleeping on floors and on Mother Earth. Generals or colonels had no thought of asking him to move. The place belonged to him until morning when a surgeon told him that if he were feeling properly rested there was now a place in an ambulance for him.

Small rooms, on either side of the entrance to the house, were used as dressing stations, where surgeons, who, at home, had carried about little black bags to bedsides and received patients in their offices and diagnosed everything from imaginary dyspepsia to aneurism and appendicitis, might realize in this all-night task that they were indeed at the front. The room on the right apparently looked after the walking cases; that on the left included both walking and litter cases. One after another, these soldiers of ours, tall or short, swarthy or blond, in their dust-stained, mud-spattered khaki, each with a red stain where a white bandage showed, came in for their second dressing. They took it much as if they were lining up for supper at the rolling kitchen. They are not heroes to themselves, only to you; especially the veterans who accept wounds as one of the features of army existence.

"Well, Buddy, where's your trouble?" or, "Where did you get it?" the surgeon asked. Buddy is the personal word, although Yanks is the generic. There were a million Buddies in France. Whether the private is a university graduate or a shoe-string vender, he is a Buddy.

"Shrapnel in the shoulder," or "Machine-gun bullet in the arm," would be the reply, as matter-of-fact as "Give me a ticket to Boonville!" when we were supposed to be an emotional, nervous people. We are emotional at baseball and football games and political conventions and the banquets of college alumni and the annual gatherings of the hardware or the grocerymen's association. Probably we shall be at the future veteran associations, even if we were not in the act of becoming veterans.

The surgeon cut off the first aid bandage and put on a new dressing, and agile, knowing fingers bound it in place, before turning to the next man. In the other room the men on litters were sometimes lying very still, unconcerned with their surroundings or unrealizing just what the surgeons were doing. These were placed in the first available ambulances, as they required more than the attention of a dressing station. Others who had bullet holes through the legs raised themselves up curiously to see the new dressing applied. They were no worse off than the walking cases, only they could not come in from the line on their own feet. Germans as well as Americans received attention. There was one German on a litter of sacking strung between two poles whose moans rose above all others out in the yard. He sat up holding fast to the toe of his boot which was

bent toward him. When the surgeon proceeded to take off the boot, the revelation of the effect of a shell fragment was accompanied by paroxysms. "The hypodermic, and nothing for that but amputation" when the German should reach the operating table at the rear. He was fifty years of age, thick-set, a peasant, who probably had never been fifty miles away from his village except when the Kaiser called him to his tour of military training, and again when the Kaiser had called him to war. It is these poor pawns of middle age and the very young boys in the German army, set to destroy villages in France in what they are told is the defense of their own country, who arouse your sympathetic wonder over the limitations of human comprehension in the days of the telegraph and the popular press.

If the queue of wounded slackened, the surgeons had only to go out in the yard to find others who might require attention, for wounded kept filtering in out of the darkness from the fields and the roads. In the dim light, with no forms clearly outlined, with some men standing and some sitting and others lying on the litters, with the moist silence of a summer night broken by an occasional moan or by deep breathing, imagination had a fuller play than by daylight.

When morning came the yard was still crowded. A group of Polish litter-bearer prisoners sat at one side with arms hanging relaxed in the same position as at midnight under an electric flash. You looked at them curiously to make sure that they had not been transformed into statues over night. In their eyes was patience asking gently, "What are you

going to do with us?" a question which the Poles have been asking of their masters for generations—asking and watching for the event which would change the map of Europe in their favor. I had a desire to take off their field gray uniforms of bondage and give them their first papers as citizens of the United States, and, after six months in an American training camp, to send them out to fight in winning back their country which had been lost in the sport of kings.

XXVIII

VIERZY AND BERZY-LE-SEC

A temporary hold-up in the attack—The final rush in company with tanks and Moroccans—A regiment that took two thousand prisoners—A chance to retire is a bid to our General to advance—In sight of Soissons—Again we "get there"—Five days of continuous offensive fighting for our First Division—Relieved at last by a Scotch division after an advance of seven miles, and the capture of three thousand five hundred prisoners and sixty-eight guns—A company commanded by a private.

THE scene at Beaurepaire Farm was singularly expressive of war, because below stairs an American general, who had been a major held in leash on the Mexican border, was in France directing his race horse division for the morning's attack with a confidence worthy of militant democracy against military autocracy. At 6 P.M., on the 18th, as already stated, the Second Division had not taken the village of Vierzy in its third objective, but it had still six hours before midnight which would be counted the close of the day, and it meant to keep to schedule if courage and impetuous application made this possible. There is a deep, broad ravine which formed a Y in the Second's sector of advance. It has many pockets, dips and turns within its irregular folds, with sunken roads and paths and clumps of bushes and trees.

The village of Vauxcastle is at the edge of the

western branch of the Y and that of Vierzy is enclosed in the eastern branch, the two villages being separated by nearly a mile of this tricky recess in the plateau. Coördination in such surroundings, where detachments must feel their way against machine-gun nests, was difficult even for soldiers who had reached their jumping-off places on the run through the forest of Retz. Before we were sure of Vauxcastle and the western branch some of our men entered Vierzy, where they secured information about the defenses at the expense of a scorching reception.

In these operations units had become mixed; and every unit had been reduced by severe losses. The first tentative attempt on Vierzy had been made without artillery support or even trench mortars or grenades; simply with the naked rifle. We re-formed our lines, and fifteen tanks and some Moroccan troops came to our assistance in an attack which was supported by machine-gun fire and a powerful artillery concentration. We knew what we had to do and how to do it, in the second effort at 6:30 P.M., when Americans and French with the tanks swept through Vierzy with amazing rapidity. The high-strung, ambitious Second did not stop until it was well out on the plateau and could report that, at the end of the most terrific and successful day any American division in France had known, it was beyond its third objective. Night had come; and the disorganization that had resulted from the speedy determined work of cleaning up machine-gun nests and hidden snipers in that paradise for machine gunners had brought a further toll of casualties, to

weaken the units which had to be straightened out in the darkness.

However, we had the ravine. If we had not taken it that night we should not have taken it the next day against the strong reënforcements which the Germans were hurrying up, as General Harbord realized, and the result would have had an unfortunate effect upon the whole operation, with far worse casualties for the Second Division. We did not quite know how we had accomplished the marvel, but the maze of difficulties was at our back with our hospital corps men searching for the wounded, while all night the men in front were kept busy readjusting their line and digging under shell and machine fire.

The Second was to go on at dawn with the aid of such reserves as the division could muster; and we pushed another mile and a half—when every rod was valuable in driving toward the Soissons–Château-Thierry road—until we were at the edge of the village of Tigny, when there was nothing to do but entrench. The Second had made a distance equal to what the other divisions were to make. It had held up its end in the fight under inconceivably difficult conditions. A single regiment had taken two thousand prisoners.

From the time that the men left Montreuil they had had practically no sleep and no food and no water except what they carried. They had gone into the attack on the jump, and they had kept on the jump, fighting on their nerves all through that second night and all the next day until their strength was gone. Their spirits were willing, but their bodies could not respond to their will. France and Amer-

ica might say truly, "Well done!" when the survivors who had swept through all obstacles were relieved by a French division.

The Germans had been bringing up fresh divisions on the night of the 18th-19th against both the First and Second, and the First Division, when it attacked at four o'clock on the morning of the 19th, was to feel their effect and that of desperate machine-gun resistance, particularly on the left where the 2nd Brigade had been unable to go beyond the Missy ravine to its third objective on the 18th. General Summerall had moved his headquarters to a great cave at Couevres on the morning of the 18th; and there he was seated opposite his chief of staff, with the rest of his staff at other tables. Everything seemed to be going in as routine a fashion as if the First were in the trenches. The 2nd Brigade had been able to go only to the Paris-Soissons road, as the French on its flank were held up and it was under a merciless fire, while the 1st Brigade, which had advanced more successfully again, had its flank exposed. The tanks which had gone ahead to blaze the way for the 2nd Brigade had run into accurate artillery fire that had arrested their progress.

Major General Summerall now had problems of real generalship confronting him. The test of the battle had come. We could no longer expect to go forward with the precision of maneuvers. He might withdraw his right; but no such thought occurred to him. He reorganized his forces to meet the situation, preparatory to advancing on the left, and the way that subordinate commanders responded to his orders was a tribute to the efficiency and coördinate

character of the division. The First was in hand; it was receiving very severe punishment, and it must have the plateau overlooking Soissons. The enemy must be put in a position where the threat to his salient would be too firmly established to be broken. General Mangin was not to be balked of his purpose, and the French division on our left was to join us in renewing the attack at five o'clock in the afternoon.

We now had no tanks in support, but our artillery was pressing close and it was insistent, accurate and prodigal in its fire. Our men, as they advanced, had glimpses of Soissons on the river bottom in the lap of the hills. It was not in their objective; but none the less it called them to the mastery of the high ground which commanded all the valley in the neighborhood, while the French saw it with the same greedy eyes as in the pursuit from the Marne in 1914. It was a tangible, historical, visible goal. We should look down upon the famous town and the Germans should look up to us, if they wished to remain on this side of the heights beyond it, where they had made the stand in 1914 which was the beginning of four years of trench warfare.

Again we "got there"—there's something very applicable in that expression. That night the First's left was in the edge of the Ploisy ravine, which descends toward the river level of Soissons, and its right was at Chazelle. Despite the resistance, General Summerall had worked out his plan in a way that left no flanks exposed. The First was in a better tactical position than on the previous night. Twenty more field guns had been captured in their hiding-places in ravines. The number of German

dead on the field was significant of how stoutly the enemy had fought on this second day. We had another thousand prisoners, including thirty-five officers who were as astounded at the result of the day's work as were those taken on the previous day; for they had taken for granted that after the initial surprise of the attack and the German army took the situation seriously in hand, it would make short work of the Americans. Our walking wounded, returning in the darkness, were often stumbling with fatigue; but there was something even more revealing than yesterday's light in their eyes, when they lifted their heads at the thought of victory.

Outside our sector beyond Ploisy was the village of Berzy-le-Sec, which will hold high place in the annals of the First in years to come. Its approaches are wicked for any attacking forces; the village itself is a natural fortress. As the French division on our left had more than enough obstacles to occupy it otherwise, we were asked to take Berzy. For two hours our guns bombarded it and then they gave our infantry a rolling barrage as they advanced at two o'clock in the afternoon, but the thing could not be done at that time in face of the increasing blasts of enemy machine-gun fire. But the First had already learned as the Second learned at Vierzy, how to go about the second attempt. It dug in on the plateau overlooking the village and it raked Berzy with machine-gun fire and pounded it with shells from its vantage ground and it tried to get a little sleep. By this time it needed sleep; and its thoughts ran to warm meals from rolling kitchens. To the rear, the scenes of other nights were repeated in the forward

pressure of the ammunition trains in order that there should be no lack of shells or bullets to continue the fight.

For the First must have Berzy-le-Sec the next morning. Shrewdly and irresistibly, beginning at four when dawn was hardly breaking—which had not given it very much sleep, by the way—it worked its way forward, cleaning up machine-gun nests until, at 9:30 A.M., it had the village and a battery of field guns and many machine guns, and began pushing out patrols beyond the village. This was the fourth day of continuous offensive fighting for the First. The Moroccans were relieved that night and the plan had been that the First should be relieved.

"I have promised my men that they shall go out to-night," said General Summerall to the French corps commander. "I do not like to break a promise."

"They——" The French commander was a little uncertain about American military customs in the matter of promises.

"They will go on!" General Summerall replied.

Of course they would—and another day, and another until all fell in their tracks, as the men of the Second would. On the 22nd they straightened out their positions and took the sugar refinery east of Berzy in the course of the operations, without many losses.

Meanwhile, trucks had been coursing along the roads from the British front bearing some canny and lusty fighters toward our sector. The officers of the Scottish division, which was to relieve the First, made reconnaissances during the day, and that

night skirted figures crept out with veteran craft to take the Americans' places. They passed the compliment that we had made a "guid fecht" and that they would carry on. Graves of Scots, Frenchmen, Americans and Germans mark the plateau where the Scots were to have some very vicious fighting against the wall the Germans had formed to protect their retreat from the salient. Our men marched away vague of mind in their weariness about the incidents of these five days—and still victorious.

It happened that the Scotch division's artillery was not yet all up, its ammunition trains had not arrived and it was expected to attack the next morning. General Summerall solved this difficulty simply. He realized how tired his gunners were; but he was their old commander and he knew their character. They were to serve another day; and thus it happened that an American artillery general commanded Scots and some French, as well as his own units. Our weary sanitary force, which had felt to the full the burden of its part in battle, was also to remain. The "taking over" by the Scots from American had a fraternal good nature due to the common language and it was singularly smooth, as a final testimonial to the efficiency of the reliable First as well as to the Scots.

The officers and men of the First felt inexpressibly and silently the loss of the comrades who had fallen; but the cost in dead and wounded, which was the greatest any of our divisions had known in a single action, and about all any division in this war has paid in a successful offensive where it carried its objectives and held them and was methodically relieved,

had been paid in striking a vital blow. Not a single soldier of the First, so far as known, had been taken prisoner. Sixty-eight captured guns were brought away from the field; some others were too exposed to be removed. As for the large numbers of machine guns taken, the First, which made so much of the taking of its first machine gun, hardly considered them worth counting. Approximately seven miles of advance was made; the greatest gain in any action since the Champagne offensive of 1917. The number of prisoners was over 3,500 with 125 officers. Together the First and the Second divisions had taken over 7,000 prisoners and over 100 guns.

Officer casualties in the infantry were high, especially among the field officers of the First. Colonel Smith, commanding the 26th, had been killed by a machine-gun bullet while making a reconnaissance. Lieutenant Colonel Eliot, of the 26th, was also killed; and all its field officers were killed or wounded, leaving a captain of two years' experience commanding the regiment. Two of the other regiments lost all field officers killed or wounded, except a colonel, and the remaining regiment lost all field officers. When seniors fell juniors rose to the opportunity.

Every battalion of the two divisions had its epic; every company had a story worth telling at length. Scores of incidents revealed coolness, daring, courage, resource and endurance; and more crosses were earned than could be bestowed in an action of such swift processes that heroic deeds passed without notice. There was one incident which has a peculiarly American appeal. When General Summerall,

who likes to see his men in action and talk with them, was down in the front line at night he came to a company which had only fifty or sixty survivors. He asked who commanded the company, and a private stood up and saluted, saying, "I do, sir!" With such natural leaders as this we shall not want for officers.

When the First and the Second were back in their billeting areas and the men had slept and washed and eaten a square meal for the first time in a week, they were playing with the children as usual, or looking into the shop windows to see if there was anything they wanted to buy. They ate all the chocolate the Y. M. C. A. and the K. of C. had to offer. They smoked a good many cigarettes. And would they have a chance to go to Paris now on leave? They had an idea that they had earned that privilege, and it was agreed that they had, even those who had not won the cross. They wondered what kind of replacements would come to take the place of friends who had fallen. With all the new men the First and the Second would be different. No! The First and the Second had a character established which would mold the recruits into its likeness. The men were not boastful, indeed they were disinclined to talk of their exploits, but there was something in their attitude which said that they had known battle and had proved themselves. As for the glowing compliments of the French and the *Croix de Guerre* and the *Médaille Militaire* and the Legion of Honor medals they wished to bestow—well, this was very gratifying.

I have written at length about the part the First

and Second divisions played, because it was influential in cracking the shell of the Marne salient and because it expressed the character of fighting in which other divisions, whose part in reducing the salient may not be given as much prominence, were to give the same gratifying account of themselves.

XXIX

FORWARD FROM CHÂTEAU-THIERRY

The New England Division at Seicheprey—This division dislikes to stop in an offensive—At last it had a chance to make a real attack—New Englanders, Pennsylvanians and regulars help the Germans across the Marne—The Twenty-sixth finds the enemy has retreated—It follows close on his heels—Pennsylvania troops in the streets of recaptured Château-Thierry—The Third has the right to be called the Marne Division—Pressing forward beyond the Marne—The Twenty-sixth held up—Lines up with a brigade from the Pennsylvania Division and goes on—New Englanders actively engaged for eight days.

At the same time that General Mangin was driving toward Soissons, French and British divisions, in the face of stubborn defenses, were making sturdy attacks at the Rheims base of the salient in order to occupy German divisions with a threat in this direction; and also another American division, the Twenty-sixth, as well as the First and Second, was attacking on July 18th.

The Twenty-sixth had had a hard two months in the Toul sector, where it had held more front than the First which it had relieved; and, I may mention in passing, that it had met at Seicheprey in this sector the first serious attack which our army had received. Seicheprey lies on a flat which is a swamp in the spring rains, under full observation from Mont Sec. The German " traveling circus " had played a " one-night stand " here on April 20th. This circus

consisted of veteran storm troops, with excellent artillery support, for making sudden thrusts which should prevent the Allied line from losing its respect for German valor. Applied to us, it was probably meant as a bit of frightfulness which would have a demoralizing effect upon our *morale*. Under a welter of artillery fire sufficient for a grand offensive, picked storm troops broke through our trenches and into the village and having done what damage they could they withdrew. Seicheprey was an old story in July, though important in April; and it should be mentioned as a primary exhibition of courage on the part of junior officers and men in face of a concentrated and well-planned effort.

After a short rest, the Twenty-sixth had been sent to the Marne salient to take over the sector where the Second Division had won its spurs in conquering Vaux and Belleau Wood. This sector was still active enough to be very wearing on its occupants. The Twenty-sixth had experienced two weeks of its vexations when it was ordered to attack on July 18th as the pivot of the movement toward Soissons. Its right resting at Vaux on the Paris–Château-Thierry road, it was to take the villages of Torcy and Belleau and advance its line on the left of Bouresches. Thus, the Twenty-sixth had to be content with a strictly limited objective in the counter-offensive when months of stalling had made it no less impatient for a real stride than the First and Second.

After the Twenty-sixth had taken Belleau and Torcy and a hamlet beyond Torcy at the foot of the commanding Hill 193 in good fashion, some units, in their enthusiasm, forgot that they were a part of

a pivot and started up the ascent. They were pushing along valiantly when they were recalled because this hill was not in their sector. There was something very appealing in their initiative, even if it were contrary to orders. One likes to dwell on the spirit of men who want to master any height. The Germans did not fail to make prompt use of 193 by establishing machine guns there to harass the Twenty-sixth's positions with plunging fire.

As the Twenty-sixth was to press against the lower side of the pocket while the divisions to the north were to take stitches in the mouth of the pocket, it was due to mark time on July 19th. That is, it was to mark time with the exception that the enthusing word came that 193 was to be taken. After the machine-gun fire which they had endured from that direction, the troops assigned to the attack went in with the kind of determination that means success. They were well started and felt absolutely sure of their goal when once more they were recalled, owing to the tactical situation which concerned other divisions and other plans. The High Command did not want them isolated on the summit without support from the left. The men, who for the second time had charged up 193 only to be marched down again, had not a favorable opinion of grand tactics at that moment. Their disgust was simple and human. Evidently, the Twenty-sixth, which had endured Mont Sec, was always to sit under fire from hills. An offensive for the Twenty-sixth meant that the hand was off the collar of the dog of war, but he could only go to the end of the leash. But patience is the great thing for all who chafe at restraint

in war. The Twenty-sixth was to be given the leash and a free field later.

By the end of the third, if not at the end of the first day of the drive toward Soissons, the Germans must have known that they would have to retire at least from the lower portion of the salient. Their problem was to save as much of their material as they could by their resistance; ours to press as hard as we could to accomplish the results which they wished to avoid. American divisions of the Paris group—called for purposes of "telegraphic camouflage" Kitty and Jennie and other feminine names, which seemed strange diminutives for organizations of warriors,—were now to carry out the purpose of their presence by not holding trenches for the defense of Paris but of fighting in the offensive. Cooperating with the French, they were to learn, as they advanced in face of machine-gun nests and harassing artillery fire, the lessons in maneuver and in suppleness and coördination which were to be the final course in instruction before the organization of our army as an integral force. As a part of General Pershing's system of progressive education, the First Corps, under Major General Hunter Liggett, was functioning in active battle for the first time with the Twenty-sixth and a French division under its command.

The German's first answer to the Soissons drive was to close the fatuous incident of crossing the Marne by the withdrawal of his troops from the south bank of the Marne, which he accomplished by returning as he had come, on bridges and *passeroles,* on the night of the 19th-20th to the north

bank, where he kept up machine-gun fire to hold back the patrols of the Third Division from following immediately; but they were active enough to ascertain the situation. Now, as we applied the pincers to the point of the salient, both banks of the river were to be ours again; and Château-Thierry was to be ours again.

On July 20th, our Third, Twenty-eighth and Twenty-sixth divisions were to know something of the exhilaration that the First and Second had known on the 18th. They were to drive ahead; but before them was no sweep of plateau with objectives in a straight line, but a river with all its bridges down for the Third and Twenty-eighth, while all the region around Château-Thierry forming the walls of the Marne consists of high hills, irregular in contour, of ravines and forests and patches of woods and roads under observation.

The Twenty-sixth had its left at Torcy and its right at Vaux in the valley before the rise in the Paris road over the crest, where it turns to the right in a sharp ascent toward Château-Thierry. On July 20th, the Twenty-sixth attacked and met with a wicked and galling resistance from machine guns which were in position to cover the German retreat from Château-Thierry and the Marne. Our line was held up in places; that was the German intention at any cost, until a certain amount of time was gained; but in face of the certainty that the defending force must break under renewed pressure, as soon as we brought up reserves and made new dispositions.

When the Twenty-sixth started to attack on the

early morning of the 21st there was nothing to attack. The German was going; and the Twenty-sixth was to give chase. Its pursuing and watchful patrols were followed by the troops in columns as they passed by positions which had vomited fire at them for the last two weeks, past abandoned German ammunition, discarded German helmets and all the evidences of hasty withdrawal, including one nine-inch gun as well as field guns, which the Germans could not bring away. It was a march clear past the Château-Thierry–Soissons road, before the patrols called a halt in face of the next line of resistance; a march, yes, but in fact a complicated maneuver along poor country roads up hill and down, keeping *liaison* with the French troops on the right and left and requiring extreme sensitiveness on the part of the feeling fingers ahead, and care lest any unit should fall into some trap which was laid under the flanking fire of hidden machine guns and a concentration of artillery fire.

Army, corps, and division commands were urging speed in front and in the rear. The German was going; we knew not how far at the time. The natural offensive spirit of troops, in the first intoxicating experience of pursuit, made us hug the enemy close. He must be given no leisure. If you look at a big map marked with the lines of the Allies' advance each day as they pressed in on the salient you will see that after the 18th, the 21st was the next red-letter day, when the Germans yielded Château-Thierry and the north bank of the Marne, which winds northeast beyond Château-Thierry to Mont

St. Père, and the great forest of Barbillon to the north of Château-Thierry, and a depth of from three to ten miles in the rough form of a boot leg from the river north to Montgru-St. Hilaire.

The forest of Trugny extends as a tongue from the northeast corner of the great forest of Barbillon, and near the forest is the hamlet of Trugny and north of it the village of Epieds; and, in this forest and in these villages, the Germans awaited the Twenty-sixth with many nests of hidden machine guns and field batteries in their support to cover the Jaulgonne–Fère-en-Tardenois road. There was an end of marching in columns as our patrols developed the enemy, but the full force of the resistance was carefully held under cover until we began an attack. The enemy had planned to annihilate these impetuous fresh American troops at this point and also any French on either flank, for he required time in this direction, on the 22nd day of July, to protect his retreat, particularly as the French, including our Third Division, were now pressing toward Jaulgonne in the other direction. It was a race on the part of our converging forces in that region of forests, hills and ravines to put the Germans in pockets within their pocket, and on their part, by the use of their *corps d'élite,* the machine gunners, with unlimited guns and ammunition, to stay our advance.

While the Twenty-sixth was going against the positions at Trugny and Epieds, an officer, who skirted the front from American division to American division with glimpses of everything from combat waves, and columns or sniping patrols of our

men advancing against machine-gun fire to all the transport of an army in movement at the rear, might have an expansion of spirit in the visual realization of our success, which was in some respects equally as convincing as that on the fields of the drive to Soissons. I doubt if anyone who has not been close to the war for four years until all its routine has become horribly normal can feel as deeply, when we do have a thrill, as we old fellows of the war whose emotions have become dormant, only to rise on such occasions as this with all the cumulative effect of experience of association as fuel to the flame.

Château-Thierry was a good-sized town. Its bridges bestrode the Marne. Town and river together were a talisman of victory. I confess that as I rode into its streets something which rose from the region of my heart was fast in my throat. Château-Thierry would not be taken again by the enemy. The tag on the rope of the four years' tug-of-war had finally been drawn to our side to remain. French *poilus* were moving about in the town in their same characteristic supple, utterly un-German fashion. I think that the Lord made a Frenchman in order to have a contrast with a Prussian. The few residents who had not flown before the enemy, were visible through the open doorways of the deserted city; and they suggested undemonstrative watchmen who had kept its altar fires burning during the alien occupation.

A column of soldiers of the Twenty-eighth Division was halted in the street leading north to the Soissons road, on its way to join the Twenty-sixth

Division. The German artillery began a bombardment. Shells were falling on both sides of the streets with the usual muffled crashing report of shell-bursts in buildings.

"I guess it's better being in the streets than in billets," said one of the men. "Probably the Boche are shooting at the streets——" which was good philosophy.

Down by the river one span of each of the bridges had been dropped in a pile of stone and mortar on the river bottom; and you looked across at a railroad engine, which was pioneering the reëstablishment of communications on the line to Epernay, and to where our machine gunners of the Third Division had kept their vigil when to expose yourself on that river bank was death. A new pontoon bridge had been laid. Along the road which follows the north bank of the river, American wagon trains and cars were moving forward tossing up mantles of dust through the ruins of Gland; and near Gland was another pontoon bridge, with fresh shell holes from 210's in the neighborhood of this fair target for German long-range guns. German pontoons which had been torn by shrapnel lay along the bank; and German dead were still unburied. We were using German pontoons in making another bridge. Mézy, across the river, where that half-company of the Third had held out with such redoubtable tenacity, was silent and peaceful against the background of summer's dark green.

The Third, which might be called the Marne division, could lay claim to still further interest in the Marne. It had held the bridge; it had checked

the offensive of July 15th on its front; and now it had the Marne at its back. Major General Dickman, a division commander who had the satisfaction of pursuit after his resolute stonewalling, was sitting by the roadside outside of Mont St. Père writing an order. Shells were falling steadily in the village, and they were being aimed at the road on the other side of him; but he was too interested in the order to notice the fact. Another German battery was paying its respects to the slopes of the hill of St. Père in the background, but our men had already passed over the hill if they were the object of the fire. The German gunners were missing us all around, Major General, wagon trains and bridges, but kicking up a lot of dust about the regimental commanders' dugout in the village.

The Third had been fighting continuously since July 15th, and some of its units had to march by the lower bridges beyond Château-Thierry, followed by its transport, in order to reach their present positions. They were tired beyond the comprehension of any man who has not carried a pack and a rifle, but that did not matter to the defenders of the Marne who were driving the enemy away from the Marne. Khaki figures were visible from the hills pushing forward around Chartrèves and into Chartrèves. One village taken, the thing was to take another. Beyond Chartrèves was Jaulgonne, along a road in rough country with steep ascents away from the river toward the north and with no limit to the obstacles on the way, beside the hard fighting which brought up fresh German regiments in vain to stay our progress. The Third was dogged in its weariness, re-

ceiving a fresh impetus with each success, and its new artillery was vigorous in support.

Along the roads toward Epieds, where the Twenty-sixth was operating, you had the coagulated effects of the pressure of men and transport to the front in its most baffling aspect to commanders. The Twenty-sixth had not enough roads for its purpose. It had had to change front in the course of its movement, adopting itself to different tactical requirements as well as different terrain. Its units were still somewhat mixed after their rush from Torcy, when on the morning of the 22nd it kept faith with orders and the demands of the situation, which required that no time be lost by attacking. The Germans had four days in which to prepare for our reception and the full nature of it now developed. The villages of Epieds and Trugny were hives of machine guns; and machine guns were cunningly hidden in the wheat fields awaiting targets that had to move across the open in full view. There are things that brave men can do and things that they cannot. The Twenty-sixth could not take these villages that day. Some intrepid units miraculously entered the Trugny woods in face of machine-gun storms in a daring effort to flank out the village of Trugny, but this was not the practicable way, as they found.

We had revealed the enemy's hand; we had information. He in turn rested and relied upon his artillery which sent over gas where he thought it would be most effective, and shrapnel and high explosives where he thought that they would be most effective. Our wounded, earth-stained and good-

natured, crawling through the wheat and out of the woods, went filtering back through the ravines away from the glut of the roads. The tall figure of Major General Edwards was seen going from command post to post, to keep in touch with the situation. His own headquarters were at Grand Picardie Farm, where a big shell hole through the thick walls let in the light on the table where he worked, and his staff officers had their offices in the stalls of the stable, while our 155 (long) guns were barking nearby.

Of course the attack was to be continued. The enemy must go. The next night a regiment rushed Trugny Wood, breaking down machine-gun opposition, and driving through the thickets almost to the other side of the wood, but it was flanked by machine-gun fire which neither artillery fire nor rifle grenades nor automatic rifles nor sniping could overcome. The engineers of the Twenty-sixth made an equally audacious supporting movement toward Trugny, in which the leadership of one officer was conspicuous; and they held tenaciously to their ground. We had made the enemy pay; we had silenced many of his guns, but not enough. We must try again.

Two battalions of the Twenty-eighth Division had already been placed at the Twenty-sixth's disposal. Now the rest of their brigade was brought up. The Twenty-eighth was going through that stage of its divisional experience, which had been the lot of other divisions, in having its units separated under other commands. This meant the application of battle lessons in association with veteran officers and

commanders, but the pupils always look forward to the day when they shall be a part of their own intact command.

This 56th Brigade had been for two days without sleep on the march from the other side of the Marne along dusty roads by the lower bridges. It had been subject to many annoyances which are inevitable when troops are being spurred forward in pursuit with roads jammed and columns converging, and when the movement of all units is subject to the needs of the moment in open warfare. Now it was to be sent into Trugny Wood to assist the Twenty-sixth in the next attack set for the morning of the 24th—the attack which was to go home.

However tired the New Englanders and Pennsylvanians were they would keep at it until they had the wood and the two villages. As the result of our attacks and our persistent fire and our preparations the Germans withdrew and the spring was in tired legs again as we took up hot pursuit. The motor machine-gun battalion of the Twenty-sixth, taking the place of cavalry, was given the right of way through the troops by Major General Edwards. Disregarding everything but speed, it hurried on to the Jaulgonne–Fère-en-Tardenois road, where it posted itself in face of the enemy's machine guns and held its position—a very brilliant stroke with all the romance of any cavalry charge.

That night the pushing Twenty-sixth was in touch with the next line of defense of the Germans and it and the brigade of the Twenty-eighth were relieved by the Forty-second Division, which had come from its successful resistance to the German offensive

of July 15th. The taking of Epieds and Trugny and Jaulgonne, as a part of the operations of the other Allied troops, closed the first stage of the fight for the salient.

The Marne salient was no longer a pocket. It was a bow. The next stage in the advance would be the River Ourcq. For eight days now the Twenty-sixth had been actively engaged, always under fire. When it was not attacking it was in pursuit or preparing for attack. There had been no rest for officers and men; all New England wanted was to wash off the accumulated dust of those eight days and to sleep. But in the tired eyes of gaunt figures staggering with fatigue there was the gleam of victory.

XXX

THE HEIGHTS OF THE OURCQ

The Rainbow Division to the front—Red Cross Farm—The attack through a ditch—The famous Heights of the Ourcq—Rainbows, regulars and the Pennsylvania division fight their way toward them—A Pennsylvania brigade crosses the Ourcq—The Thirty-second Division from Michigan and Wisconsin in the fight—History and character of the famous Thirty-second—Particularly belligerent, especially from Milwaukee—The hand-to-hand fight at night—A tough proposition—Fierce fighting when the Rainbows crossed the Ourcq and attacked the height beyond—The men from Michigan and Wisconsin storm the heights—Our boys advance under machine-gun fire quietly smoking cigarettes—Victory at last, and our men eat captured German rations.

It was under sniping from riflemen, machine-gun fire and persistent dogging artillery fire, grimly suggestive enough of the task which it had in hand, that the Forty-second relieved the Twenty-sixth Division. There is a temptation, as they come from different States, to mention the regiments of the Rainbow Division, only this would mean mentioning all the American regiments engaged, which would require a book for each regiment, if one fully narrated its exploits. Again, there are no States or counties in the A. E. F., which is entirely United States, although spirit of corps is welcomed in every unit, while the division for tactical purposes is the unit to which one naturally refers.

My purpose in dwelling on the taking of the Red

Cross Farm is not to exploit the valor and the shrewdness shown in its storming as exceptional, but because it was such a characteristic illustration of the opposition which we had to overcome on the way to the Vesle. The buildings of the farm form a big compound, of a type familiar in France. Its thick walls of stone and mortar will stop machine-gun bullets. The effect of a shell which penetrates the walls is localized in the room where it bursts. Wooden farm buildings at home, being readily set on fire by incendiary shells, would be of little service for defense; those in France become veritable fortresses, with their deep cellars turned into refuges, when the walls were falling from a concentration of high-explosive shells, which is the best medicine for them. Out of the débris the machine gunners build strong emplacements for their guns, and they come out of the cellar to man any surviving guns when the bombardment is over.

The Red Cross Farm was ideally located for German purposes in the midst of an open field, with its main buildings looking toward two roads of approach from two sides of the forest, which made its location suggestive of the house of a pioneer in a clearing. The Germans had concentrated their machine guns at the farm and at the entrance of the forest where they could sweep the roads. When we came through the forest we were in full view of the farm, which had machine guns under the roof, on the second floor and on the lower floor, and also in bushes in front of the buildings, I am told. There was evidently not a square foot of space on three sides that the guns did not command.

The farm looked innocently peaceful until we aroused the hornets; and we did not arouse them all with a patrol of a few men. This required a demonstration in force. The German commander was not going to display all the cards in his hand until it was worth while. The Forty-second had fought its way forward through the woods under gas and shells and sniping to find that this farmhouse held the key to the positions ahead, while it was supported by strong forces of German infantry at other points.

After six hours' effort at encircling and flanking a simpler plan was revealed. It happened that a ditch ran along the road from the south, past the farm on the one side which was unprotected, and that the ditch was hidden by a straggling growth of bushes all the way from the forest right up to the entrance to the compound. The ditch and bushes were not on the military map; perhaps the bushes had grown up since the map was made. There are many features in terrain which are not on even the largest scale maps; and this accounts for the desire of energetic battalion commanders to see for themselves where they are going. Whether or not the grass or grain in a field has been cut is a matter of vital importance. A patch of pole beans in a garden, or an isolated shrub, may conceal a machine gun.

It did not require any staff councils to appreciate the value of that ditch and that line of bushes. In the early morning of the 26th two platoons led by two lieutenants crept up the ditch. Their adventure was the more daring and perilous as they did not know how many gunners and machine guns were en-

sconced in the group of buildings; but they had no doubt of the result once they came to close quarters with the gunners. Then the man-to-man element counted. It was light enough for our men to see when they rushed into the compound and scattered for the entrances to the buildings.

You recollect the painting of the two men with pistols drawn across a table which was a very impromptu duel, and many pictures of " hands up " in Western saloons, and what happens when the train robber appears in the railroad coach, six-shooter in hand. There were not even impromptu dueling formalities on this occasion. It was a matter of " getting the drop " on the other fellow. The Germans were not expecting us and were either at their guns with their backs to us, or drowsing; and we knew why we were there and that every second counted. There was very ugly individual fighting while it lasted, and, when it was over, the survivors of the two platoons had possession of the farm and a machine gun for every survivor, and more ammunition than they could carry forward for firing at the Germans.

This was only one farm; its taking appealingly sensational. Every farm on any German line of resistance was a machine-gun nest. White Cross Farm was also stubborn and won by determined charges; but it was the taking of Red Cross that opened the way for the division to the Ourcq, which is a thread of a stream except when a rain swells it from the watershed of the famous " heights of the Ourcq." These sweep down in long descents to the river bed, with great stretches of open field, and they are quite

up to their reputation as heights, as every soldier of four American divisions will agree.

Now the right flank of the Forty-second found itself in the open while the left was still in the irregular Forest de Fère. On that immense apron sweeping down toward the bend in the Ourcq, in front of Sergy and Cierges, there was a single tree, which, for the climbing, offered a view clear up to the edge of the forest and to the heights on the other side of the river. I have no recollection of any more important tree than this isolated, scrubby sentinel. A German observer occupied it, with a telephone, and he also had a saw with a view to preventing any successor enjoying his privileges. He had cut two or three inches into the trunk before our skirmishers' bullets hissed "Woodman, spare that tree!" and brought him down. But he had served the purpose of directing the German guns where to find the Americans who had not come in view of the heights of the Ourcq and to be ready for them when they did come in view.

Shell fire was not going to stop the Forty-second, particularly when it passed over the rise, and, before it, down the apron, lay a dark run, which was the river bed, the fringes of trees, and beyond it the same upward sweep of fields dotted by woods. It was a great panorama of landscape; and the broad view included on the right advancing figures in khaki which did not belong to the Forty-second. These were men of the 55th Brigade of our Twenty-eighth Division attacking the village of Fresnes. On their right was the Third Division, which had fought its way through from Jaulgonne. Thus three

American divisions were moving together towards the heights of the Ourcq.

Would the Germans, now the salient was pushed into a bow, make a stand on the Ourcq? These divisions were not bound by speculative inquiries. They were on their way to secure a direct answer. The hidden batteries in the Meunière Wood east of Sergy, with this procession in full view, had such a number of targets that they could not hope to stop such a systematic movement. We swept through the shell fire and the machine-gun fire which developed as we approached the Ourcq. It was better to go forward than to go back and we went forward. That night the Forty-second had some of its elements across the Ourcq, and, after a hard day, it knew by the machine-gun fire and shell fire from the heights beyond Sergy and Cierges, that the German was not in any mood to yield such excellent positions without a fight, which was a further justification for the Forty-second in driving down those exposed reserve slopes.

July 27th, including what the Forty-second and the other American divisions had gained, was another red-letter day, as the whole Allied line had advanced from Basileux in the direction of Rheims to Bruyères in the direction of Soissons, and on the 28th the line was to move forward over a greater length, if not for as much depth, in the process of pursuit and closing in on the enemy's new line of resistance. It is well to bear in mind that immense forces were engaged in the operation, which required that there should be persistent pressure, or troops sufficient to make the pressure when opportunity oc-

curred, along the front all the way from Soissons to Rheims.

Our Twenty-eighth (the 55th Brigade), which was proving its worth by its gallantry and endurance, now had taken over a sector from a French division under its own command, while the Fifty-sixth was fighting under the French, and took La Motte Farm and the village of Courmont on the morning of the 28th and planned to keep on across the Ourcq. It had been raining; but this was not such a hardship in midsummer, as the men who had no chance to wash at least had the advantage of "feeling" water. No midsummer's rain is the slightest reason for delaying an operation unless it stalls ammunition trains. The rain had made the Ourcq, which was easily fordable as a rule, a stream fifteen yards wide and three feet deep. There was a call for a bridge, which the Twenty-eighth constructed out of timbers from the ruins of villages, and the next morning it had two battalions well established on the other side of the "creek," as the men called it, and it would be considered nothing more than a creek at home. The bridge had been built and the crossing made under shell and machine-gun fire which was never to cease until the heights of the Ourcq were cleared of the enemy.

On the 29th another division, the Thirty-second, former National Guard from Michigan and Wisconsin under Major General William G. Haan, which, after service in a quiet trench sector, was to have as abrupt an entry, considering its previous preparation, into violent attack as any division in our army. Its success was not remarkable in this respect alone.

When it arrived in France in the previous March, it had been made a replacement division, which meant that it was to be occupied back of the lines drilling replacements for other divisions. It sent over two thousand men, including nine captains, as replacements to our First Division; one regiment was entirely separated from the division for a while; the others were sent to the S. O. S. as labor troops. Wisconsin and Michigan were not altogether happy over the arrangement, but, at this time, before the great rush of troops from home, necessity required that some division should play this part.

Major General Haan believed in his division, and he is a man who persists in his convictions until they take form in action. On April 15th, when it was decided to make the Thirty-second a temporary combat division, one-half of the enlisted personnel remained. These were from Michigan and Wisconsin. After four weeks' training the division went into the trenches in Alsace, and you began to hear pleasant things about the Thirty-second. At one time it was holding sixteen miles of front. Those whose business it was to know decided that this temporary combat division was good enough to help reduce the swelling of the German line.

On July 19th the Thirty-second was sent back of the Soissons sector by train, and, after two days' waiting there, it was started on a long journey in motor trucks to the Ourcq. Certainly if any division had won its own way it was the Thirty-second. Replacement division? I have heard men of other divisions, including the French, sound the praise of the magnificent way in which the Thirty-second ad-

vanced down the slopes under shell fire, without so much as a quiver of a break in its precision, as it came into action on the Ourcq. The Michigan and Wisconsin men still with the division will tell you that they have kept up its character—and no doubt they have character. It is a quiet, undemonstrative, workmanlike division in which officers who have automobile makers in their companies feel no hesitation in saying that their commands are every whit as good as the companies with a large number of lumber-jacks.

Some people thought two years ago that Wisconsin was pacifist and pro-German, and that Iowa took no interest in the war or preparedness. From the way that Wisconsin, and the Iowa men of the Forty-second, charged the heights of the Ourcq, it would appear that when these two States make war it is of no pacific variety. They put conviction into their blows. Farmers' sons did not come from the Middle West to France on a holiday. They had come to make the kind of war that the enemy would respect. As for those supposedly pro-Germans from Milwaukee, they were peculiarly belligerent.

The Thirty-second was to take the place of the Third Division, which closed its brilliant service with a final burst of energy in advancing on Ronchères Wood. If ever a division needed a respite from war it was the Third. Including that regiment which held the railroad track against the German assaults on July 15th, it had kept on with the pursuit in heat and dust against stubborn positions, with intervals of a day or two in reserve for the different units, as it was not within the endurance of any human

beings to fight continuously for two weeks without sleep. On this drive to the Vesle we were to learn how the healthy physical régime of camps and drill grounds, with no stimulus except good food, reenforces youth with reserve strength that is a bank account for such emergencies. Let our youngsters drop from exhaustion, and after ten hours' sleep they were fresh again, which is not true of their elders.

The brigade of the Thirty-second which took over from the Third began attacking, in conjunction with the Twenty-eighth, at 2:10 in the afternoon of the 30th. The Thirty-second, pressing on into the Grimpettes Wood, was met by machine-gun fire from the Cierges Wood as well as in front. It attained a large portion of the Grimpettes Wood and a footing in the Cierges Wood, which is practically an offshoot of the big Meunière Wood. Elements of both the Twenty-eighth and the Thirty-second reached the edge of the village of Cierges, which they found full of gas. By this time it was known that the Germans were in exceedingly strong force, including fresh troops as well as countless machine guns and the batteries under cover of the Meunière Wood. Indeed, there was evidence that the enemy meant to make a definite stand on the Ourcq.

We withdrew our advanced units while we held off a counter-attack from the Germans on the right. That night the Germans made a rush in flank from the depths of the Meunière Wood, which was out of our sector, against our troops who were in the small Grimpettes Wood. The truth was we were ahead of the division on our right and exposed. Our men in Grimpettes with bayonets fixed, in the sheer

belligerent relief of close contact after facing machine-gun fire, turned on the Germans, and, in the dense darkness of the woods, it was cold steel to a decision. There was little quarter given; there could be little quarter given, in such an affair of darting shadows which encountered each other in the midst of underbrush. One man might be disclosed to another at only a pace's distance; and between two men meeting it was a question of which made the first thrust. The hot panting shouts of the Americans were mixed with the outcries of Germans and with the breaking of twigs and the straining breaths of struggle.

It was ugly, terrible, primitive, this hand-to-hand wrestling, which lasted for half an hour with our men forcing the Germans back and pursuing them as listeners knew by their eager calls, sometimes uttered in language which the chaplains would not approve; for the business of every American was to drive at a German and then another until there were no more Germans in sight except many dead and wounded. The German had had a lesson in night attacks against our troops in the woods. His forte is in other weapons than the bayonet; and, if he tries the bayonet, he should avoid lumber-jacks or vigorous young farmers from the Northwest.

During the night of July 30th-31st, the Thirty-second relieved the weary Twenty-eighth, which had been marched and counter-marched from the other side of the Marne, and had fought in a manner that entitled it to rank now as a veteran division. Thus the Thirty-second and the Forty-second on the left had the field alone, and, by this time, there was no

discounting the nature of their task. Rising beyond the village of Cierges, of slight tactical importance itself, flanked by the depth of the Meunière Wood, are a series of heights, with farm buildings that became the ramparts of defense, and with ravines and sunken roads and folds and swales and patches of screening woods—Pelger and Planchette and Jomblets—culminating in Hill 230, which gives a view west and north and south for many miles. Such a position might have been chosen for a baronial castle by a baron with numerous enemies.

It is well not to forget that a machine gun has a range of over two miles. The Germans had installed on these heights at every available point machine guns which could sweep the roads with long-range fire and web with enfilade fire every step of advance. These guns were manned by the men who were there to fight to the death, reënforced by artillery and first-class troops. The Forty-second with its line bent toward the heights had its right flank under their fire; and it had had no cessation of fighting since it reached the Ourcq with the 4th Prussian Guards on its front. Its left flank was just east of Fère-en-Tardenois. German aeroplanes had added interest to its situation by flying low and raking the roads with machine-gun fire. It had taken Sergy and Seringes with their machine-gun nests. Shall any one of the Forty-second ever forget the fighting in all that neighborhood where every regiment was engaged, New York, Ohio, Iowa and Alabama? Or Muercy farm, where our men swept past enfilade machine-gun fire through the wheat field because that was the only thing to do? Major McKenna, who

commanded the battalion engaged, said that he would force the fighting and he did—and fell leading his men.

It took three days to conquer Muercy Farm. We gained it finally by a rush through a small woods that ran close to its walls after a strong artillery preparation. With all its regiments across the Ourcq on the 27th, the Forty-second was ahead of schedule and while it was employed—with the aid of a battalion of the Fourth Division which had come up in reserve—in cleaning out machine-gun nests and establishing itself in defenses in front, it also went outside its sector in charges against the heights beyond Cierges, taking Hill 212, assaulting the Bois Pelger twice and mixing with the Thirty-second in the common effort of striking at the sources of its casualties. Who was who at times may have been difficult to tell; but we were all in khaki, all with indomitable courage and natural aggressiveness, striving to conquer the heights that punished us with machine-gun fire.

The Thirty-second was fresh, and in the impulse of its first offensive effort. From the morning of July 31st it was not to stop driving against the heights until they were won. The village of Cierges was practically the center of its line. This was promptly occupied, after it was free of gas, despite snipers, including one firing from the church tower from under a Red Cross flag. Beyond it was Bellevue Farm, which the Germans had made the same kind of a fortress as Red Cross Farm. It stopped the attack in front, but some of our men, keeping cover in the ravines, pressed past its enfilade fire

on up close to the crowning height of Hill 230, where they met machine-gun fire from Reddy Farm in front, while they had that from Bellevue Farm on their left rear and from the Meunière Wood on their right rear. Hill 230 would have to wait a while. We were not out to commit suicide, which is the invitation of the German machine gunners to troops that are too daring.

"Well, we know where you are!" as one of the men said, before these advanced parties slipped back under such cover as they could find to wait on the reduction of Bellevue Farm; and the left flank, which had charged and taken machine guns in front in the Jomblets Wood to the east of the farm, were bidden to dig in and hold on for the same reason. Major General Haan was pushing hard—but he had to control the "get there" spirit of his soldiers. He brought up more troops, re-formed his line and gave the word to his artillery. Every hour of July 31st and August 1st, including the night, was one fraught with unremitting activity under continuous fire for the division. If we had no sleep we gave the German machine gunners none. If they kept us under fire we kept them under fire. Bellevue Farm was attacked from both sides. Snipers held down the machine-gun fire while small parties advanced under such cover as they could get.

Our men formed up in a swale to move on the formidable Planchette Wood, and as they came out in the open, there was no faltering in face of the venomous rattle that came from the wood. They went along quietly, smoking cigarettes. When the wood could not be taken with direct assault we sent

in small groups of snipers to fight duels with the German gunners. Everywhere it was a platoon sergeant's fight, as one of the officers said, the fight of the Red Indian scouting and creeping, of individual groups meeting emergencies. At night, we had to bring away our wounded quietly, following ravines and folds in the ground; for at the first sign of movement, ugly flashes would come out of the darkness speeding bullets toward any moving shadows; and overhead German aeroplanes were humming as they looked for targets for their bombs.

On one of the summits after the fighting was over ten Americans were lying dead facing ten Germans. All the Americans had their bayonets fixed, and one with his bayonet pointed toward the enemy, was rigid in the very attitude of charging, his toe dug in the ground just as he had fallen in the assault. The ten had not killed each other man for man, and the result must have been due to the cross fire from machine-gun nests. There seemed no end of machine-gun positions; positions where the German dead lay beside their guns; and positions prepared already to receive guns when they were moved.

Our unremitting pressure had not only broken the resistance, but it had made the Germans pay a bloody price. On the night of August 1st we possessed Hill 230 and Planchette Wood, and our men of the Thirty-second, whose courage had had its reward, were eating German rations, which in their hunger they found excellent; and most particularly welcome were the little bags of sugar which the Kaiser supplies as incentive to bravery to the men who are supposed to stick to their machine guns to the death.

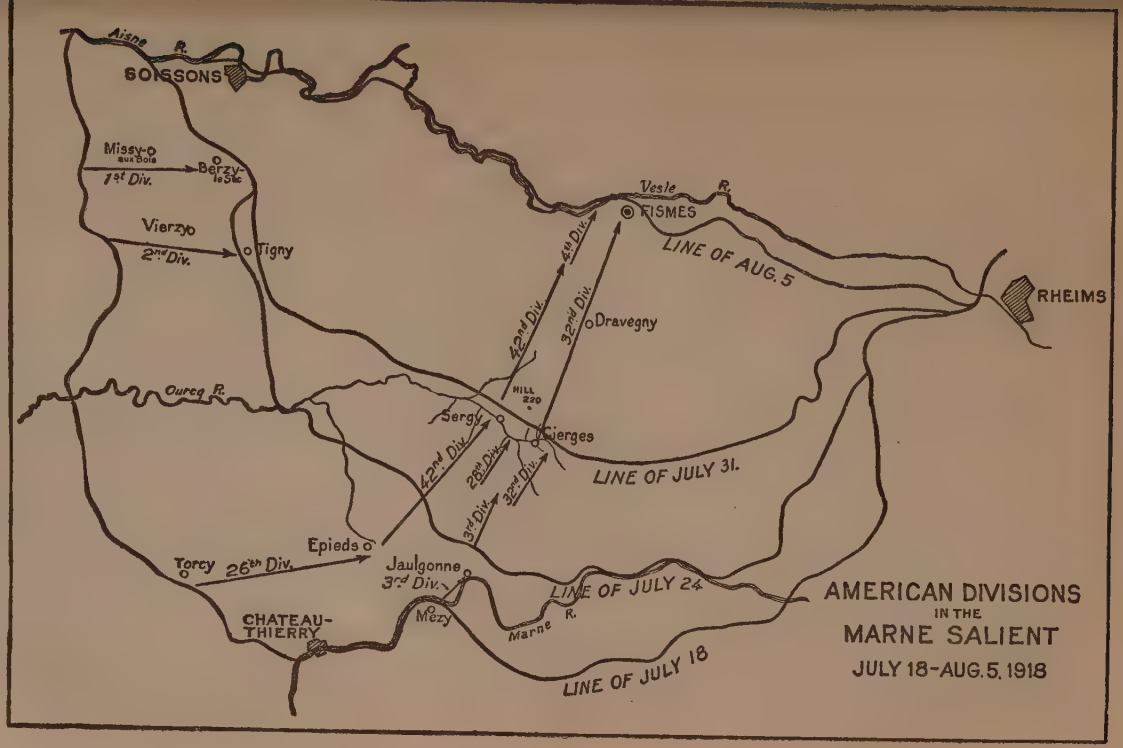
XXXI

TO THE VESLE

German defense gives way and our pursuit begins again—The Rainbow replaced by the Fourth Division—The Thirty-second Division takes Fismes—What this fighting division did later at Juvigny—The Pennsylvania National Guard Division along the Vesle—The baptism of fire of a "melting-pot" division—Our battles in the Marne salient proved the fighting quality of American troops—Our young officers—"Don't say Wop!"—Men who won the crosses—A month ahead of the programme.

AUGUST 2nd was another great day. On this day Soissons was ours again, and Rheims made secure, and, all the way from Soissons to Rheims, the map marked a broad belt of advance of the Allied troops to the river Vesle. The chief of staff of the Forty-second Division going up at dawn to Bois Pelger, which his men had attacked to save themselves from its machine-gun blasts, found that it was deserted. Wherever he looked there was no sign of the enemy, and there was so sound of machine-gun fire. Only a little artillery fire broke the silence after those days and nights of unceasing combat. We had cracked the shell again. The Germans were going.

Now, the chief of staff of the Forty-second knew that his freshest troops were his engineers who were in front at Nesles. He went to them first. The men whose business it was to build bridges and dig trenches and put out barbed wire needed no urging to stretch their legs in pursuit. Then he went on


Aisne R.
SOISSONS
Missy-aux-Bois
Berzy-le-Sec
1st Div.
Vierzy
2nd Div.
Tigny
Vesle R.
FISMES
LINE OF AUG. 5
RHEIMS
4th Div.
42nd Div.
32nd Div.
Dravegny
HILL 220
Ourcq R.
Sergy
Cierges
42nd Div.
28th Div.
32nd Div.
3rd Div.
LINE OF JULY 31.
Epieds
Torcy
26th Div.
Jaulgonne
3rd Div.
LINE OF JULY 24
CHATEAU-THIERRY
Mezy
Marne R.
LINE OF JULY 18
AMERICAN DIVISIONS
IN THE
MARNE SALIENT
JULY 18-AUG. 5, 1918

to his regimental commanders, whom he found already preparing to advance. They had realized the situation at daybreak, and the men on outpost duty had, too, when no bullets from the enemy welcomed the dawn. It was as if a saw tearing at wood had suddenly cut through.

The French, who had been prompt to grasp the situation, were ordering an attack along the whole line; and the Thirty-second was already advancing. Its objective for the day was Chamery, but it went on in the joyous chase with the French on its right and the Forty-second on its left until night found it at Drevigny. The regiments in reserve were brought up to the front line in order to press forward the next day. After some delay from machine-gun fire on the left, the advance became a march again, with the French cavalry patrols out in front adding to the interest of this delectable release of a maneuver in the open across an undefended area, after fighting machine-gun nests.

The weary Forty-second, to whom pursuit had brought the stimulus of a draught of champagne, had given its reserve strength in its final rush of retaliatory exhilaration. It yielded its place in line, when it reached Chartrèves, to the Fourth Division, which had been in support. The Fourth had been passing through the usual preparatory period of having its detached units engaged under other commands. During the first week of the counter-offensive some of these had been fighting on the western side of the salient. The Forty-second, in common with the Third, had known the meaning of holding against the German offensive. Major General Menoher had

fought his division in keeping with its reputation and spirit, the rivalry of its units welded into homogeneous divisional efficiency.

On the night of August 3rd, both the Thirty-second and the Fourth looked down upon the valley of the Vesle from the southern heights and across to the northern heights. The plan was to go on until resistance developed, but, when the Thirty-second started its advance the next morning, artillery fire from the other bank served prompt notice that the Germans were there in force; and progress down the slopes met with machine-gun fire. Information from prisoners brought word that the Germans had well-prepared positions across the Vesle, which was not surprising. There was not even a bow between Rheims and Soissons now. The ominous swelling of the Marne salient had been entirely reduced by the proper surgical operation for such ailments.

The Fourth and Thirty-second were to have three very fierce days in the valley of the Vesle before they were firmly established on the bank, and before the Thirty-second doggedly, by repeated attacks, had fought its way into the good-sized town of Fismes, which was still held by the Germans with machine guns and snipers, the bridge at their back having been sufficiently destroyed to prevent wagons from passing, while leaving a section which permitted men to cross. Naturally, the Germans had all the advantage of the situation at the start. They had prepared defenses, and their artillery covered the slopes which we must descend. When the Thirty-second had crowned its week's work by entering Fismes, and it had its outposts settled on the north side of

the narrow stream facing the Germans, it was relieved by the Twenty-eighth Division.

A quiet sector in Alsace had proved sufficient training for such soldiers as those of the Thirty-second to press the issue with a merciless initiative against the strongest positions machine gunners could well occupy. Now the Thirty-second was spoken of as a combat division without the addition of the word temporary. After it had rested, it was to be sent to as wicked fighting as modern warfare provides when it was attached to General Mangin's army, northwest of Soissons, for the flanking movement in the direction of the Chemin des Dames. There, attacking through the ravines and gullies and over ridges and old trenches in this battle wrecked and wracked area, it took a thousand prisoners and the village of Juvigny. Elements of its infantry, dashing forward, were unconscious in their earnestness of doing anything sensational when they shot down the horses of a German battery which was just limbering up for retreat, capturing the guns and the gunners who had survived their fire. Their leader was the same officer who, upon coming to the edge of a ravine, ran plump into a German officer. He held out his hand, good-naturedly, and the German officer shook it and surrendered with all of his men. There is still some resourcefulness in the United States even if we are out of the pioneering stage of our development. The Thirty-second had losses in keeping with its accomplishment at Juvigny; and, after Juvigny, it was as entitled to be called a veteran division as it was to be called a combat division.

On August 4th, the Third Corps, under Major

General Bullard, took command of our troops in the Vesle sector in order to gain such experience as the First Corps had gained earlier in the Marne counter-offensive. The Twenty-eighth Division at last had come into its own with Major General Muir in command of a divisional sector. One of his gallant companies had charged across the broken bridge in the darkness and established itself in the little village of Fismette on the north bank. Isolated by day, well entrenched, it met machine-gun fire and sniping in kind; and, at night, it received reliefs and food across the broken bridge. For the Vesle was anything but quiet. Both sides were extremely sensitive to any threatened attacks, under remorseless nagging which was quite as hard to bear as bursts of machine-gun fire into a charge. There was a good deal of night bombing from the Germans on our side; and our aerodrome reports showed that there were plenty of bombs being dropped on the Germans. Our own artillery, we were sure, was giving full return to the German long-range shells which were falling on villages and roads as far back as Drevigny. It was most gratifying to see our motor-drawn 155's (long) moving into position, as it was one more sign of our growing force.

The Seventy-seventh Division, National Army from New York City, which we have seen training at the British front, whence it went to Alsace, was brought to the Vesle to relieve the Fourth Division. It was the first national army division to go into a violent sector. Very different this from the languid shelling and the occasional trench raid and routine patrols in Alsace! The melting-pot was put to the

test of the fire that crucibles require—the old, old test of facing sudden death, of suffering pain from wounds and of submitting self to superior orders and to the will of destiny.

Indeed, these men of all races and religions, who had known only city lodgings and city streets, were having hardships quite as stiff as any of the Pilgrim Fathers who landed on the poet's rock-bound coast, down there below the heights in that hell's kitchen of the Château Diable, fair mark for all kinds of projectiles, and in their little outposts across the river and along the railroad tracks, and in the woods and ravines where they had to wear their gas masks for ten and twelve hours on end. The approach by day to the valley, where they held their ground, required dodging from shell crater to shell crater against sniping rifle fire. Many of the soldiers of the Seventy-seventh were of the type which the Kaiser would not allow to stop over in his country on their way from Russia to America. His steamship companies might make dividends out of carrying them in the steerage, but he did not want them as residents of Germany where he was breeding warriors. They were now bound for Germany by another route.

You could not expect a little man who had worked in a factory and lived in a tenement on the East Side, when his mother and father had been narrow-chested before him, to have the physique of a Michigan lumber-jack or an Iowa farmer born of generations that had blown their lungs in fresh air. A national army company from the villages and the ranches is bound to have more strength for carrying up trench mortars to the front line than one from

mean streets, although, under the physical régime of the army, some of the East Siders had developed from puniness to robustness in a year's time.

The spirit! Did they have that? This was the right ingredient for the melting-pot under machine-gun fire. They were proving that they had under merciless test; and that they had certain qualities of ready adaptability which go with city life. The stories about the comradeship formed between men who knew their morning baths and their clubs with men from the tenements are true. It was "Buddy" back and forth between bunkies, whatever their origin; they had learned to appreciate the man-quality in each other.

Major General Duncan, commanding general of the Seventy-seventh, who had come across the Atlantic with the First Division as a colonel, had earned a star, and then two stars, in action. He was a proper leader for such men, with his white hair and ruddy face, his poise, his sound professional ability, his comprehensive interest in all who served under him and his singular talent for developing the best that was in subordinates. All the army was fond of Duncan, who had a knightliness of character which we like to associate with soldiers for a good cause. The Seventy-seventh was fortunate to be under his direction in a critical stage of its experience. After its long gruelling on the Vesle, it was to have the opportunity for attack and pursuit when the Germans retired from the river and to show, despite what it had endured, an offensive spirit and a suppleness which justified the faith of a nation in the melting-pot.

The entry of a national army division into the sector while it was still violent had been a fitting close to our operations in the salient where General Pershing had used all his immediately available trained divisions. Their conduct had justified his faith in them, and they had helped in the action which proved the correctness of his opinion that the salient would crack under a determined attack.

Another phase of our army's preparation had passed. There was no need of any pessimist among us standing any longer in awe of the great German army. We had borne the severest pounding that the artillery of a German offensive could concentrate; we had seen the enemy break under our blows; we had known the supreme joy of pursuit over trenches and gun positions and villages and through woods, which had vomited their fire upon us, after they were silent and peaceful as the result of our attacks. The German knew now that when he met American troops he must expect unremitting pressure at close quarters, and we had learned much by actual experience and from observing the French who fought thriftily at our side.

Every time that I went over the enemy's defensive positions I marveled how we were able to take them in face of machine-gun fire. When you are riding along a road consider that a machine gunner may be waiting in a bush for you at the turn, or, when you are walking across a field, consider that a machine gunner may be waiting behind a hedge or in a fox hole in the tall grass or a stand of wheat, and you will have an idea of the kind of fighting which we had all the way from the Marne to the Vesle. Our

instinct, as I have said, was to charge the nests; to close in on them, which was usually the best way and the quickest of conquering them, not to mention the moral effect upon the enemy. The German depended upon his machine gunners to stay us longer than they did, and this left material in our hands and meant confusion to him. The French were less impatient than we were. Their veteran methods, the product of racial qualities as well as experience, were illuminating.

"You see some Frenchmen in a village," as one of our officers said, "and, according to our ideas, as they sit about munching bread and smoking cigarettes, they don't seem to have much system. The next thing you know they are in the next village. They've got there. Of course, they know by instinct the terrain, the roads, the villages of their country—and they are on to Boche tricks."

Our young officers from our training camps at home, many of them only boys, brought, in face of death, a mixture of gayety with their serious effort to apply all their lessons. With them and their platoons and companies, who pressed close to the enemy, rested the burden of fighting. It was they who directed the moves of attack and the combat columns; they who crawled up in reconnaissance when the machine guns compelled a halt; they who directed the cunning patrols which slipped up ditches or ravines or through the woods in the darkness for sudden onslaught; they who realized that they must never show fatigue or downheartedness.

With a few exceptions none had known anything of soldiering when we entered the war; they had not

been bred among soldiers or associated with soldiers. Not all were from the officers' training camps. An increasing number of privates were earning in action the privilege to go to the officers' school in France in order to study for commissions. The door of promotion was open to every officer and private and the cross was the reward of courage. Many paid the price for their gallantry. Every one of us in the army knew one of these, whose death was a personal blow; but it was a greater blow to someone at home. Mothers of these fine, clean young men who fell in action may have a memory worth more than that of a living son whose parents or friends managed for him, or he managed for himself, a place at the rear —which rarely happened. When men return from the war, ask them where they served.

If there is anything to take the snobbishness out of one it is the record of those days in the salient, when nobility appeared in quarters where it is not expected to appear by those whose lives in grooves separate them from their fellow-men. I have avoided mention of individual instances of courage, of cool initiative, of the wounded still fighting, of comradeship's loyalty tested by danger of sacrifice and generous fearless impulse, because of their universality.

"Don't say Wop!" as a soldier who was of several American generations exclaimed. "No! Wop don't go any more!" an Irish-American joined in. "That's looking down on them. We're looking up to them, these days."

Those little dark-skinned emigrants from Italy had shown the character which is the only kind that

interests you in the man at your side under fire. "I gotta keep up," as I heard a little man, staggering from fatigue under his pack, say one day, when "keeping up" meant that he was moving into heavy shell fire. Again, "Sheeny" does not seem just the right word for a Jew who charges a machine-gun nest. There is an old idea that men fight best in the defense of their homes. I am not sure that they do not fight best for a principle far from home. Did any Czechs, or Poles, or Greeks want to serve in contingents of their own race? No. They wanted to be in the American army; and they saw this war as an opportunity to show by the blood-test that they were Americans.

Along with the Smiths, the Davises, the MacPhersons, the O'Briens who won the crosses, we had, as an example, Private Digiacone who won his cross as one of two surviving defenders of four men who held off a German raid; Corporal Shumate, who, after his platoon had been practically destroyed, continued forward to his objective and remained all night under heavy fire; Corporal Grabinski, who led his machine-gun crew with extraordinary heroism, ever pressing forward against the enemy machine-gun positions until he was killed; Sergeant James Kochensparger, who gave an example of courage that was inspiration to the men of his command; Corporal Gustave Michalka, who, with two of his men, charged a machine gun which was annihilating his platoon, and killed the operators and captured the gun; Private Joseph Isaacs, who, although wounded in the head, crawled from within a hundred feet of the German line back to our line, a

distance of a hundred and fifty yards, bringing a more severely wounded comrade on his back.

What was it that the Allies were saying late in June and early July? If we could hold until August 1st, the arrival of America troops would make our defense secure. On August 1st, we had conquered the heights of the Ourcq and were starting in pursuit of the Germans to the Vesle. Has there ever been such a transition of feeling as that which began on July 18th with the drive to Soissons? Stroke after stroke driving the enemy back! More and more prisoners and guns! That great German army was fighting in a muddling defensive. Accepting the word of the German Staff that the withdrawal was according to plan—why, then it made a very poor business of the withdrawal.

The thrill of entering Château-Thierry was only one of many during August for the man who had followed the war for four years, with first place, perhaps, in seeing the cathedral at Amiens practically unharmed and all that deserted city beyond the range of any German guns which were not in our hands, and the Canadians and Australians and the French driving the Germans before them toward Péronne and Ham. Where were those superficial observers who thought that the British army could not make another offensive, and who were asking in late July, "Will the British do anything? Can they?"

Our own joy in taking positions, which had blazed death into our ranks, could hardly be as deep as the joy of British veterans who had regained fields which they had fought over again and again. The spirit that marched to the relief of Lucknow and stormed

Quebec, the "Up, Guards, and at 'em!" spirit, which had carried the English tongue over the seas and into the wilderness of new lands, was across the Hindenburg line. July and August were great months for civilization. They saw old armies galvanized with fresh energy; and a new army prove itself.

XXXII

SAINT MIHIEL

Our first field army—As big as a French group of armies—The chiefs of staff—How big we were, when the American army assembled in Lorraine—A mountain that we would have—Characteristics of the famous Saint Mihiel salient—An eyesore to the Allies—French troops under American command—The largest number of American troops in one battle in the history of the U. S.—Our officers venture a trial of skill with Ludendorff—Careful and thorough preparation for our own battle—Moving up for the attack—A vast organization ready to go.

GENERAL PERSHING'S wandering soldiers were coming home to him; and they were very glad to come. Whether training in Flanders or in Artois, or fighting in Champagne and in Picardy, they were always asking when they should join their own army. As they might not enjoy the privilege of the French and British soldiers of going on leave to their family homes, Lorraine became their army home. They wanted to be together in one family in their transplanted United States in France, with its permanent American arrangements.

All our divisions, which had assisted in reducing the Marne salient, were sent to Lorraine, where they found themselves in a world which was talking in terms of corps instead of divisions. Our first field army had just been organized. It was equivalent in size to some French army groups, while one of our corps was almost equivalent to a French army,

and one of our divisions almost equivalent to a French corps, this being another instance of our tendency to do things on a big scale.

Naturally, General Pershing was to command our First Army until he had organized the Second Army. The Chief of Staff of the First Army was one of the dreamers who sat at one of the little tables in our first headquarters in the Rue de Constantine in Paris working out the million and two million men project. You will recollect that after the project was formed, he became occupied in preparing an organization in the full faith that the millions must come and would come before Germany was beaten. He studied the other armies, and he had time, too, while waiting for the millions, to do considerable thinking, which is one of the most important ingredients in making plans for large bodies of men in action. The officer who had been the operations expert of the First Division since its arrival in France was called to G. H. Q. just before the Soissons drive, and he and another officer, who had been watching the operations of all our divisions, began working over maps and plans for our first army offensive.

The choice of the chiefs of staff sections, the "G's," of the First Army, formed as favorite a theme of gossip in regular army circles as that in political circles concerning the cabinet "slate" of a President-elect. This did not particularly interest the young second lieutenants and their doughboys, who knew that there was some kind of a managerial force which issued orders while all they had to do was to obey orders; yet, it was a very deep concern to them and to their mothers and fathers, as upon

these G's depended the wisdom of the orders and the consequent ratio of success to our casualties in any engagement. The big G's of the General Staff had long been training officers in the different branches and trying them out in the older divisions, with a view to selecting those most fit for binding our scattered divisions together in an army under our own responsible command.

A chief of artillery, Major General Ernest Hinds, had been appointed in the early summer, and he had set about organizing his staff before he had much artillery, which was, of course, in keeping with General Pershing's prevision in making ready to direct the use of material without loss of time when it arrived. All our guns were moving toward the Saint Mihiel sector, and all our aeroplanes, and all the tanks of the tank corps which had been months in drilling. All energy, all thought seemed to be directed toward Saint Mihiel. Yet, no one who went there said where he was going, and no one who returned from there said that he had seen anything unusual. We were having our first lesson in military secrecy.

On the way to Toul from G. H. Q. you rode for hours through villages where you saw only American troops. Our original training area had been expanded over a vast region. The veteran divisions from the Marne salient, with the gaps in their ranks filled by replacements, were resting, according to the prescribed régime, which did not mean sitting in the doorway of their billets all day. They were drilling again and making ready for the part which the organizers of the First Army and of the different

corps were preparing for them. These old divisions had lost many of their staff officers, and regiments and battalions had lost their commanders, who had gone to higher responsibilities in other organizations.

When officers met in the family reunion before Saint Mihiel they were almost too busy to exchange mutual congratulations upon their most recent promotions. Besides, promotions had lost their novelty. The mighty undertaking overwhelmed every other consideration. The real thrill was in the impressive assembling of men and material. One was reminded of the remark of Mr. Smith who attended the Smith family reunion. "I knew that there were a lot of Smiths," he said, "but I did not realize how many until I saw them together."

Divisions and their transport, with their guns, ambulances, motor trucks, wagons, which had been streams in the French army, were flowing in a common reservoir. The mighty throbbing impulse of the Service of Supply was felt running along the railroads from the ports to the railheads and on up to the front wherever a cartridge was fired or a soldier ate a piece of hard bread. Had we really grown this great? Had the Allied shipping been able to bring all this force, human, mechanical and material, across the Atlantic in face of the submarine? This and more. We still had divisions with the British and the French, divisions in sectors in Alsace and in training and en route from the ports.

The intensity of the night before our first entry into the trenches, of the night before our offensive at Cantigny, of the night before the drive to Soissons,

was now that of an army. Immense numbers of men and guns alone would not bring success. We must have an organization equal to our undertaking. General Pershing had expressed the character of the undertaking one day, in the previous March, when he was looking up at Mont Sec, which looked down with such lofty patronage on our men in their miry trenches in the lowlands. "We ought to have that mountain," he said. Indeed, he had long ago made up his mind that he would have it. As far back as July, 1917, he had planned that the first offensive of the American army when it became an integral force should be against the Saint Mihiel salient.

In the early days of the war that triangular dagger-like indentation in the Allied battle line irritated everyone who glanced at a map of the Western front. It seemed to be a military anachronism which could not long endure. In 1915 the French made an attempt at its reduction, but finding the resistance very formidable in a period when France had to conserve her man-power, the attack was not pressed to a decision. Thereafter the salient became an accepted part of the line no more incomprehensible to the layman than many other features of the war, but a fact.

The salient is broader than it looks on the map, which does not reveal the heights which form its walls. Five minutes' observation from Liouville, one of the forts of Toul, gives you an appreciation of the character which even larger scale maps cannot contribute with equivalent force. Looking north and northeast are a series of ridges and high hills. The most conspicuous of these is the camel's

hump of Mont Sec, and looking east, at their base, is a stretch of level country broken by the whitish patches of the ruins of villages and the sheen of small lakes and ponds and by clumps of woods. The Germans had held the high ground; the French had held the low. Eastward, although out of sight, is Pont-à-Mousson on the Moselle river, in Allied possession, which was often mentioned early in the war. From high ground in that neighborhood the city and fortress of Metz are visible.

The town of Saint Mihiel itself is at a junction of roads and in the bend of the Meuse river which forms the point of the salient; and the Meuse runs on through Verdun, which is protected by the hills crowned by the forts whose mastery Germany sought in her onslaught in the spring of 1916. From Douamont and Vaux you look out over the plains of the Woevre. Thus, the chain of French fortresses face Metz and the hills of German Lorraine across an intervening space on French territory which must be crossed before either adversary approaches the permanent defenses of the other. Academic military casuists may enjoy themselves in the future in pondering on whether or not the German should not have concentrated on Verdun and Toul and the eastern frontier of France instead of going through Belgium. In that event, perhaps America would not have been in the war, and our interest in the salient would not be associated with the largest force that had participated, up to that time, in a single action in all our history.

In September, 1914, when the Germans were stopped in the battle of Lorraine on their left flank,

before Toul and Verdun and in the Argonne in their center, and by the battle of the Marne on their right, they fastened upon the natural ramparts, which form the Saint Mihiel, and held fast, having regard not for lines on flat maps but those on relief maps. The salient enabled them to break the railroad line from Verdun to Commercy, Toul and Nancy; it supported any movement against Verdun; it was a threat in flank of any French offensive toward Lorraine, thus assisting in confining active operations to the line from Verdun to Flanders; and, finally, it placed German trenches in commanding positions which, despite the wedge form of the line, meant that the drain of casualties day by day ought to be in the German favor.

General Pershing's plan of striking at the bases of the salient was simple, as the plans of all great operations are. Its distinction was in the boldness of the stroke by a new army, which some military leaders considered absolute folly. Under the observation of Mont Sec and other hills, we should have to storm strong defenses through three or four lines of barbed wire before we came into open country. We might break through the first line, we were told, but, even if we succeeded in taking the second, the third would stop us; or, if we broke through the third we should find ourselves under the fire of German batteries directed from Mont Sec, while the terrain beyond the regular defenses favored machine-gun nests. Our losses would be staggering, even if we forced the evacuation of the salient.

We were to have the assistance of French artillery, aeroplanes and tanks, which were to serve under the direction of our own chiefs of artillery, aviation and

our tank service. The responsibility was ours; the whole operation, including all the French troops in line, was under command of General Pershing. With the repeated Allied blows in the offensive draining German reserves, the German Staff, facing the possibility of having to shorten its line on the Western front, might not be expected to send in many divisions to make a desperate struggle to hold the salient. Yet, the fifty thousand German troops within the salient were a formidable force, if they were to make stubborn use of their defenses.

Two American divisions, side by side, were the most that we had ever had under American command in an active battle sector. Practically, all our fighting had been by divisions; and our divisions, with two exceptions in the Marne salient, had been alternated with French divisions. Our First and Third Corps, in their brief experiences in the Marne salient, had been under a French army commander. Now, the situation was reversed; now, we were directing French troops instead of having our troops directed by French generals; now, we had eight American divisions in line under our corps and army command in an operation more difficult than that of a straight frontal attack.

Our paper organization had expanded with a healthy deliberation; but the troops which filled out the forms of organization in living practice had arrived in a flood. Many units, especially those which form the links of organization, had had no real battle experience as units, let alone in coördination with other units. Their assembling into a whole was of itself a problem; the operation against the salient,

simply as a tactical maneuver, was a serious enterprise for a young army. We ought to have had more time for preparation; but, with winter approaching, when the Allies wished to make the most of the headway which their offensives had gained, time was very valuable. Divisions must not be kept idle. There must be action.

We had a new phrase in our army lexicon, "Advanced G. H. Q.," which followed General Pershing to the First Army. Where the chiefs of the big G's were formerly dealing with the details of divisions they were now saying, "That is an army matter." Those at army headquarters were saying, "That is a corps matter"; and those at corps headquarters were saying, "That is a division matter." There are certain defined methods of organization for large armies which are the result of the accumulated experience of previous wars and particularly of this war. We followed them. We might consider, too, that the principle of throwing two hundred thousand men against a salient is the same as throwing a thousand.

The main thing was for no one to become hectic under the pressure of responsibility, but to take it calmly. You would have thought that the Staff of the Army and the staffs of the corps had been directing immense operations all their lives. As they had been looking forward for a year to this army being formed, and gradually preparing for it, the fulfillment of anticipation hardly came as a surprise. One by one we had risen to occasions. We must rise to this, which is not saying, however cool every officer appeared, that, in the back of his head, there was

not a good deal of apprehension which was the proper corrective for optimism. If we failed, many critics would be justified in their declaration that it was impossible for us to form an army staff which could efficiently direct a great army.

The arguments and the pressure had been strong for us to place all our divisions under the direction of the Allied commanders to use as if they were French and British divisions, particularly at a time when every division counted in pressing the offensive against the weakening Germans. Why should these old European staffs believe us capable? Looked at in one sense, there was a magnificent audacity, on the part of the graduates from Leavenworth, in thinking that they might successfully direct a new army of assembled divisions, which had never acted together, against the German Staff, which was directing forces coördinated by generations of training and preparation and by four years of war. The chief of operations of our G. H. Q., who had never maneuvered ten thousand men except on paper, before this war, was daring to meet Ludendorff on the chessboard of war; and he was not more overawed than the generals of the democratic army of the French Revolution were by the enormous prestige of the Austrian staffs.

Another argument in favor of infiltrating our divisions into other armies was the inspiriting effect of the association upon Allied divisions, although this seemed to be rather labored, considering the way that the Allied divisions fought in France and in the Balkans and in Turkey in September. The supreme argument against infiltration was the one which I

have mentioned at the outset of this chapter. Our soldiers wanted to be with their own army; they wanted to be under their own general. An army is supposed to be a pure autocracy where men obey orders and keep their opinions to themselves. So it is, and yet without any balloting system, it expresses itself in the irresistible silent note of its spirit; and the sentiment of our soldiers required an integral force.

General Pershing had certainly not been timid in his choice of a test as to whether or not, after a year's study of the Allied staffs, we were capable of directing an army. We had the advantage of not becoming careless through staleness or through the conviction which goes with the confidence of experience and long traditions. The graduates of all the schools in France which Major General McAndrew had organized, with their stiff curriculums in every branch of staff work and command, were now coming into their own. Without the schools we should have had only a handful of men who knew anything about large organization. Could they apply their theories in practice? Was what they had learned only theory? Hardly. They had taken their lessons from notably efficient officers fresh from the front.

Responsibility of a new and terrible kind, ambition, patriotism and the magnetic influence of being a part of immense forces, all gave impetus to our industry. We were bound to neglect no details in the book. Any shortcomings would not be due to negligence. Every young lieutenant who played errand boy for a colonel; every reserve officer who

directed traffic at a railhead or an ambulance section, as well as reserve officers who had been to the schools; every engineer, military policeman, surgeon, sanitary corps man, aviator and balloonist, was trying to keep everything he ought to do in mind and to do it exactly according to directions. Sometimes the directions were confusing; sometimes they did not work out. When they did not initiative came into play. Sleep did not matter; nothing mattered except to perform your own little part as an atomic cog of the First American Army which was about to go into action.

The troops should not want for any assistance resource could provide. Our map printing establishment had maps in prodigal abundance for the officers who were to lead their men over the top. Each platoon's part was carefully prescribed; each company's, each battalion's, and so on up through the corps in studious detail. Everyone in his objective earnestness became subjective in the fear that he might be responsible for some vital mistake. Our casualties might be enormous. What if we had not enough ambulances? The Red Cross as well as the regular medical establishment was very intense. What if we should run short of ammunition? If the engineers failed to make roads for the artillery? If the aeroplanes failed in their part? If the tanks did not come up to expectations?

The stage was being set for an immense spectacle. Guns by the hundred, yes by the thousands, of all calibers, each had to go to its place, and its part assigned. They must not be seen moving on the roads by day. No great concentration of traffic

should be visible. Traffic casualties in motor trucks that had run off the roads into ditches were morning signs of the difficulty of working in the dark. The infantry, which were to go over the top, waited, of course, upon the setting of the stage and the forming up of all the supers, before they came on the scene massed in the darkness for the attack. The roads were theirs—they were masters of the world—as they left the cover of woods and villages, and in their shadowy columns with their steady tread, expressive of man-force in its organized, one-minded purpose, moving toward the front. The sight of them deepened everyone's sense of responsibility in his work with the thought of what the morrow might bring forth for them.

Aside from the old divisions, the First, the Second and the Forty-second, we were to have in the attack a new regular division, the Fifth, and the Eighty-ninth and Ninetieth National Army divisions, with the Eighty-second, another National Army division which was to mark time at Pont-à-Mousson. The Twenty-sixth Division was by itself on the other side of the salient acting with French Colonials for a short objective. Our main thrust was to be from the southern side of the salient toward the town of Vigneulles-les-Hattonchâtel, which lay midway on a line from the two sides which would eliminate the salient. The attack was set for 5:30 on the morning of September 12th. When it began raining on the previous day, this was a poor augury with its promise of roads turned into mires. The Germans thought that we would call off the attack because of the rain; but General Pershing had

no such thought. The result, with its surprise, was better perhaps than if we had had dry weather.

We were ready, on the night of the 11th, in all that plans and orders could accomplish, with nothing further to do except to await results. Those at corps and army headquarters who had made the plans might sleep while they had the opportunity. Work would begin again when they had the reports from the field and had to deal with the situation which these should develop.

That waiting force of men, guns, transport suggested some mighty mechanical vertebrate whose parts had been assembled for its first effort in locomotion. We knew that we could depend upon it to "go." The spirit of the troops assured this; but whether or not it would keep to the road or founder for lack of proper articulation, only the action could reveal.

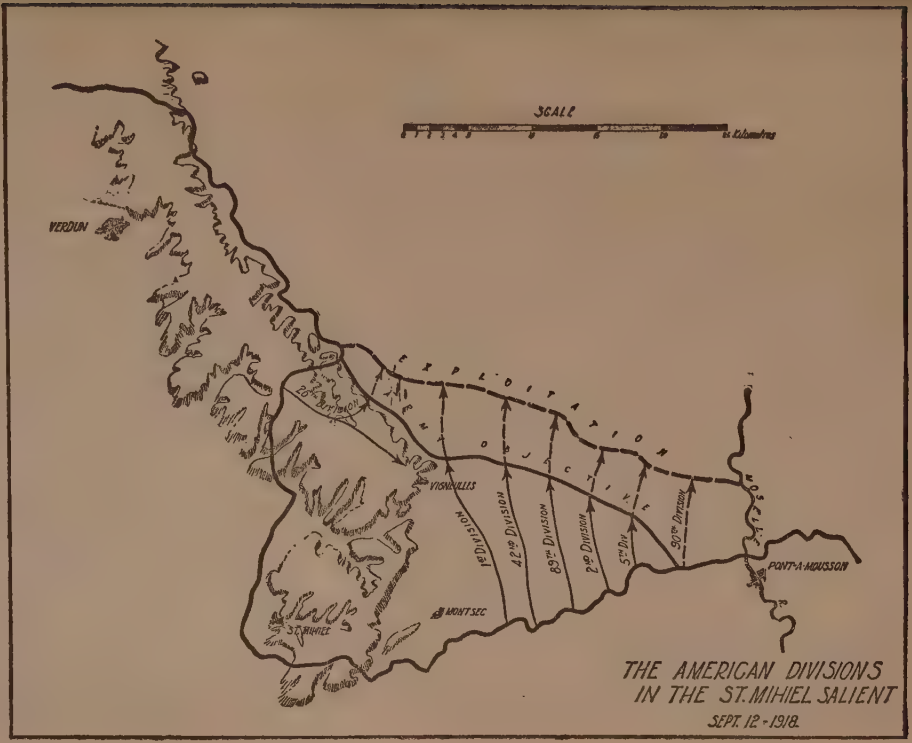
XXXIII

WE TAKE THE SALIENT

A thunderstorm of artillery breaks loose—Over the top at 5:35—Vagaries of tanks—A world all American—Roads clogged by astounding mass of transport—German prisoners—The division from Missouri and Kansas—"Like taking candy from children"—Germans surrender in crowds—The salient blotted out—Fifteen thousand prisoners and light casualties—An operation that worked out as planned—Belgians liberated—The gratitude of the French—General Pershing not unhappy.

A RIDE through the night brought me, before dawn, to the top of a commanding hill overlooking the Toul sector in time for the artillery preparation for the Saint Mihiel attack, when all the guns, which had been nursed so solicitously into position, broke the clammy silence with their unorchestrated voices, and a man-made aurora-borealis shot out of the wall of darkness. What does one really see when an avalanche of sound and of shells is suddenly released in a bombardment? As much as one sees of an electric storm without being behind the clouds where the storm is made. There were darts of flame in the foreground from nearby batteries, while the leaping, continuous flashes ran on clear to Pont-à-Mousson. All the world, inclosed under canopy of night, was aflame. Piercing tongues of lightning and broad flashes of lightning! Little lightnings of the 75's lost in the mighty lightnings of the big calibers!

It was our challenge as an army to the enemy.


SCALE
VERDUN
VIGNEULLES
1ST DIVISION
42ND DIVISION
89TH DIVISION
2ND DIVISION
5TH DIV
90TH DIVISION
PONT-A-MOUSSON
MONT SEC
ST. MIHIEL
THE AMERICAN DIVISIONS
IN THE ST. MIHIEL SALIENT
SEPT. 12 - 1918.

The labors and sacrifices of the people at home were concentrated in this inferno of accumulated preparation. Our guns were speaking the power of the Mississippi's flow; of the heat of the deserts; of the coal and metals from our mines; of the throbbing life of our cities and towns and the long lines of railroad track from coast to coast; of the cotton fields and wheat fields—to support the flesh and blood of our men waiting in the front-line trenches to commence our first attack as an army. It was the thought of our men which made you pray that all the shells screaming over their heads would go straight to their targets; it was the thought of them that stilled the pulse in suspense.

The minutes pass as the lightnings continue their terrific witchery. It is five-thirty-five. The men have gone over the top. Moist and slow-breaking dawn revealed dark patches as woods, and white streaks became roads in the developing outline of landscape, while Mont Sec loomed out of the distance across the valley as a promontory looms out of the mist at sea.

There was little answering German shell fire, so far as you could see. If the German artillery were active it was directed against our infantry which was out of sight. How was the battle going? Were we advancing in unbroken success, or were we struggling against barrages and machine-gun nests? Curiosity as to the result overwhelmed all other considerations. Corps headquarters would begin to have definite news of first results by eight o'clock.

At the Fourth Corps, in command of Major General Dickman, who had led the Third Division in its

brilliant work on the Marne, one learned that we were everywhere through the first-line defenses and advancing. There were no details in the brief reports which had been received. Military reports are not literary. All the corps wished to know, and this very definitely, was about the progress of each one in the chain of divisions on the corps front, and, if any one were held up, the nature of the opposition, in order to direct the action of the others. Although all information thus far indicated complete success, it was not the business of the Commanding General or the Chief of Staff, reading the message slips, to form any conclusions other than those vouchsafed by the facts. Affairs in the midst of the Corps' first battle seemed to be proceeding as smoothly as in any well-regulated business office in an active period.

The wireless outside corps headquarters was bringing news; the telegraph keys and the telephone were bringing more news over the wires; the aeroplanes were dropping message cylinders. Everything was quite according to the routine of a veteran corps, French or British. You had more bits of information from officers who came in to report. One concerned the tanks, which had been having a characteristically merry time. A few had been stuck in crossing No Man's Land; a few always are. The tank is a temperamental beast which has been slowly trained to routine; but he is a fiery dragon of wrath when loosed in the enemy's country. Tanks had been seen trundling about ahead of the infantry across roads, fields, trenches, ditches, looking for machine-gun nests which they might devour.

But corps headquarters was well back of the

front, in a stone-walled mausoleum, as one officer called it, built from a quarry, where its processes would not be interrupted by the enemy's fire; and, now that your human curiosity was satisfied, the thing to do was to follow the troops. You rode forward into a world whose existence was no longer a military secret. From the moment that the artillery had loosed its thunders men need no longer deny any knowledge of the reason of their presence, or of that of the mobilized material for the offensive.

All the transports, which had been moving by night, now moved forward by day, as the Germans were by this time quite aware of the fact that we were attacking the salient. A casual visitor who had been to other fronts might take all this traffic for granted as reflective of the size of our nation. He lacked the early days of our expedition for his standard of comparison. It was in this same region where we had been given our first divisional sector. There was something enormously impressive in the revelation of growth as all the wheels that carried supplies for guns and men began turning.

No French blue ran through this world except occasional French officers in a car or a truck which was serving French batteries, tanks or aerodromes. Otherwise, it was all khaki and American, with the attentive military police at the turns, the signs in English warning against " double-banking " and announcing a " one-way road." It was American in the big ammunition trucks and the dispatch riders and all the detail of a great army in being. Look across country and every road was a solid line of American transport, halting and surging forward

and halting, in the effort to reach the infantry. The whole region from Pont-à-Mousson to Beaumont was webbed and plotted with activity. We had not enough horses, not enough motor trucks, not enough of anything, of course; but the amount we did have was astounding in its leviathan pressure toward the front.

An automobile with the articulation of an eel would be a welcome innovation in threading such traffic. It was a triumph of locomotion to reach a division headquarters, which was that of Major General Wright, of the Eighty-ninth, where the scene was very different from the quiet corps headquarters. In the drizzling rain, a line of German prisoners was being interrogated before being marched to the rear. Another group awaited their turn in the field; some others had been set to work. Automobiles, side-cars and motor cycles were parked in the mud in front of the dugout occupied by the division commander. Officers who came in to report, as one said, did not take much interest in the news that the Cubs had lost a game in the world's series, in view of the preoccupation of the Saint Mihiel series. They showed more emotion than the General and his staff, who were crowded in a gloomy recess, their delight that of the intensity of the hound in pursuit, as they aimed to keep touch with the retreating enemy and make sure that the Eighty-ninth marched as fast as any of the other divisions.

Was this all there was to attacking the formidable Saint Mihiel salient? I had not seen a single shell burst yet, or any sign of the enemy's anger, except bombs that were dropped from the German aero-

planes in the back area. Picking your way past the transport you came to the old German line, and, in No Man's Land, the absence of any of our dead, as far as you could see, was visual proof of how the day had gone. The engineers were doing their best to bridge over the trenches and to make a solid road across the porous soil, seeping in the rain, in order that the transport blocked at the rear might follow up our advance. American and German wounded came by on litters borne by German prisoners, and there were little detached groups of prisoners, all of whom were ready to smile very propitiatingly at the first sign of a smile from their captors—all except one typical, square-headed Prussian drill sergeant who looked very sour. His men had not fought, that was the truth of the matter. The end of his harsh military world had come for him.

Looking far ahead you saw a little shell fire in the Thiaucourt Woods, which was the only sign of action. Down the slope, in the foreground, were the rusty fields of barbed wire of the second and third lines of defense which were meant to make the salient unconquerable. These stretched along the whole front of our attack. Only the "get there" spirit explained how our men had gone through such mazes, or around them. The road on the German, as well as our side, of the trench system had been a typically well-metaled French road, and our engineers were filling in the bad patches worn by rains in the course of long disuse on both sides, with earth. A brigade commander had just established his headquarters in an old German command post, and his was the same simple problem as that of the

division commander in pursuing the retreating enemy as fast as the legs of his men would carry them. Our surgeons, at a former German dressing station, sunk into the embankment of the road, had little to do. When a wounded American came in, they gave him another dressing and called in some passing German prisoners to carry him away on a litter.

The prisoners were old and young, but not the poorest class of German troops. Hardly one I saw had any mud on his uniform, which was evidence that they had been taken from their dugouts without resistance. They looked as neat as if they were ready for inspection. Compared to the men of the Eighty-ninth from Missouri and Kansas, tanned, and hard, and showing the effects of the rain and the march and the mud, they seemed peculiarly ineffective. If they had been taken by surprise so had their captors, who were keyed up for bloody effort in their first fight, and who found that all they had to do was to gather in all the Germans in sight. They could not quite understand how, after all they had read of what charging frontal positions meant, they should have had such an easy victory.

"It was like taking candy away from children," as one of them said. "But I guess it won't always be like this. We had the jump on them this time."

An American tank was stalled on the road, its captain seated on the embankment. He smiled, showing his white teeth. Had he been in it? Oh, yes. In as much as there was of it. His tank had run up to the mouth of dugouts and up to machine-gun nests, ambling about. The chief worry of the Germans whom he had taken was lest he should not

understand that they meant to surrender. They had waved white handkerchiefs from the mouths of dug-outs before they put up their hands. One middle-aged German who was dug out of the bushes where he was hiding, when he was brought to the road and saw an American officer standing in front of him, cringed and jumped to one side, trembling, with a plea in his eyes. He was anything but the militant personality whom his officers had tried to create by telling him that Americans gave no quarter.

German gunners, two miles back of the line, with no fresh shell holes about their positions, had not even taken the camouflage off their guns to fire into our advancing infantry, but had deliberately avoided action, apparently to assure their safety. This, taken with other incidents, which confirmed observation, indicated the reason for the slight resistance. There was no use of an observer going any further. It was not a battle. It was a field day for every division. Our troops did not require direction. All they had to do, along the whole length of our line of assault, was to keep on advancing to their objectives, cleaning up any machine-gun nests on the way.

Having learned that we were to make a great attack, it was said that the Germans, realizing that they could not hold against the ardor and force which they knew would characterize it, had been preparing to withdraw from the salient. Be that as it may, it does not interfere with the significant results. The enemy had troops in line behind strong defenses, and he had artillery and machine guns, which were undoubtedly supposed to make us pay a price for success. The die-hard spirit was not in this com-

mand. After our tremendous bombardment drove them to cover with its sudden burst of lightnings, and they saw our waves of infantry advancing under our barrages with irresistible vigor, the Germans, acting all together in the hard instinct of their machine training, with the few exceptions of some machine gunners who kept faith with the Kaiser's expectation to give their lives for him, simply sought self-preservation. They preferred living as prisoners to dying for their Emperor in hopeless resistance.

It would have been much easier to follow the troops on foot than to make one's way to the rear from the Eighty-ninth Division headquarters in a car. Moving this way and that, blocked on one road and then another, by the congestion of traffic, it took two hours to make a distance of ten miles.

That night, General Pershing commanding the First Army, had only to give orders which would complete the reduction of the salient and establish our new line. It was a contest between the First and the Twenty-sixth, the two divisions which held the swamps of the Toul sector in the most hateful memory, as to which should first reach the town of Vigneulles-les-Hattonchâttel, which was midway of the base of the salient. Both drove ahead all night picking up more German prisoners on the way. The First must have been the most surprised of all the divisions by its easy victory. After Cantigny and Soissons, it knew the meaning of a big offensive and was prepared for a savage business. Those veterans wondered if they were dreaming or not, as they hurried along in the rear of those forbidding heights of the salient walls.

The Twenty-sixth had a little advantage in the race and the advance party of one of its regiments set foot in Vigneulles before any of the patrols of the First, at dawn on the morning of September 13th, and, with the forts of Verdun in sight on their left, they looked out on the promised land from the heights of the town, with the plain of the Woevre stretching before them in a wondrous panorama. Now the high ground was theirs and they tasted the revenge for all they had endured from Mont Sec. Any wandering Germans between Vigneulles and Saint Mihiel were trapped. Some, who had been on the march for twenty-four hours, would have escaped if they had started an hour earlier; but, in their fatigue, they did not much care what happened to them.

The next day all the world, for the first time in four years, looked at the battle line of the Western front minus that irritating dagger thrust, which was also wiped out, along with the Marne salient, on the map in General Pershing's office at G. H. Q., where salients were particularly offensive. By the fruits of our victory we might judge its character. We had taken fifteen thousand prisoners, or three for every casualty of our own, and two hundred guns and much light railway material. The railroad from Verdun to Commercy was freed, and the threat, from the flank, against any operation in the direction of Metz and German soil, had been removed. We had given a bold, clean and dramatic answer to the question of whether or not we could make an army organization, and we had learned many lessons of experience which would be valuable in future actions.

The salient was won in such approved order that we called the action the "army maneuvers." The chronicler, who ought to give the event a great deal of space, finds that it went too smoothly to furnish any sensations. It is the emergencies of battle, the development of unexpected resistance, the ebb and flow of fierce attack, the strokes of prompt generalship in the field, the resolute defense of a tactical point and the repeated charges to win a strong position, which furnish the thrills of war. Saint Mihiel was one of the few operations on record that worked out "as planned."

Our rejoicing, however, could not equal that of the people who lived in the salient. Among them were Belgians who had been brought from their homes to work behind the lines of the German army. Some Belgians were marching back behind a body of German prisoners when a Belgian officer saw them.

"No! no!" he cried. "Not with the Germans! They are Belgians—Belgians! My people!"

Consider their joy, which they shared with the residents who gathered in the streets of their villages, at the sight of the men from overseas who had driven the Germans away. It was almost too good to be true. At first, they were struck with wonder; and then French emotion let itself be felt in a way that convinced the Americans that it was not unpleasant to be "heroes."

The inhabitants of Saint Mihiel, on their beloved Meuse, might look up at the trench-scarred ridges and hills, which give their town its picturesque situation, now silent and free of the enemy. After living within the German lines, across the river from their

own French army for four years, they might rebuild their broken bridges and their homes, earn money to replace their mirrors and clocks and the brass-work which the Germans had purloined, read their morning paper from Paris, speak their minds about the Kaiser, pass through streets where there were no German soldiers, walk abroad without being shelled, gather in their cafés and buy and sell as free citizens. Their own President of their own republic, whose home was in Saint Mihiel, came along with General Pershing and the French generals, to the celebration, where old and young gathered in honor of their deliverance. They were happy beyond expression, and they adored General Pershing and his soldiers as knights from a far country. General Pershing himself was not unhappy. He had that mountain which he had been wanting for a year; and a reward, which affected him far more deeply, in the joyous faces around him.

XXXIV

OUR ARGONNE BATTLE

Popular expectations of the next move not realized—Offensive after offensive planned—The "sacred road"—Hard fighting ahead of us—Many new divisions in line—The woods, nature's camouflage of war—The eight divisions that began the Argonne attack—A monstrous truck towing a balloon—A daring German aviator, and the result—Our command of the air—A division from Virginia travels a hard road—Over a mile of shell holes—The only point in the first stage of the Argonne battle that seriously arrested us—The open spaces where the infantry reign—A modern gentleman-at-arms—Up against machine-gun nests again—Draft men in a lull of the battle.

THOSE who thought that the Americans would make the taking of the Saint Mihiel salient the first step of an immediate movement toward Metz were to have their surmises confounded by action in another quarter. It was not in Marshal Foch's plans, or General Pershing's conception, that our army should confine itself to some one established sector of attack. In the execution of the Marshal's swift offensive movements, striking with sudden violence here and there, we should be a mobile force within the reach of our line of communications, which had been originally planned with a half-wheel of range from the hub of its main depots for just such contingencies.

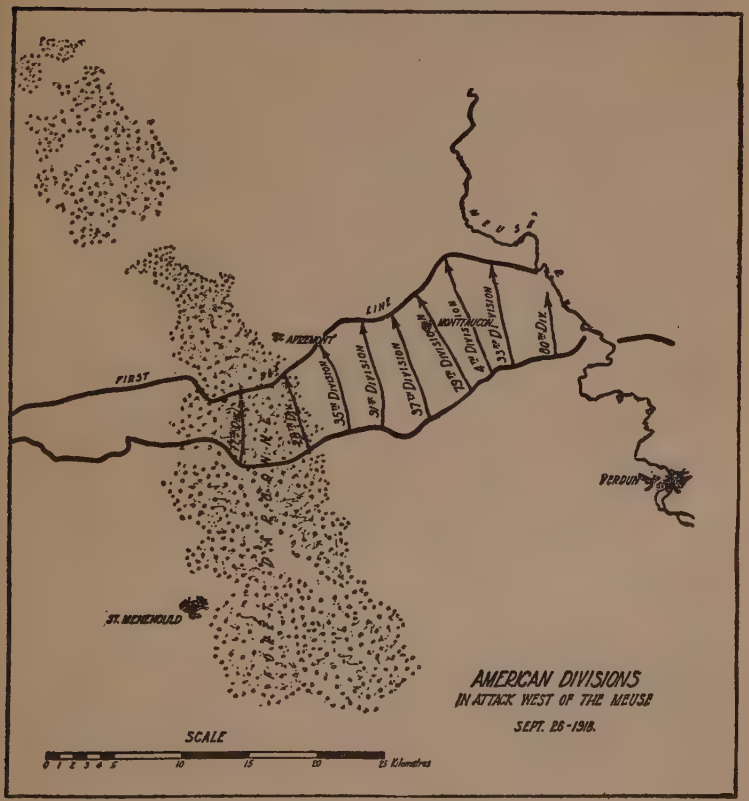
While our divisions which had won the salient were settling on their new front as a threat to the Germans in Lorraine, which at any time might develop into

a thrust, the first of the divisions for another concentration was slipping undemonstratively away from its training area; and the big guns mounted on railway trucks and the rest of our heavy corps and army artillery—including the artillery which the French had loaned us for reducing the salient—having finished their task for the time being in the Saint Mihiel sector, were moving by the roads which lead past Verdun. In this second offensive of our army as an army we were to use none of the troops which had been at Saint Mihiel. All the veteran divisions were missing from the line of assault, if we except the Fourth and the Seventy-seventh, whose terms of service had been brief compared to those of the First, Second, Third and Twenty-sixth and Forty-second.

We were to attack a part of the old German line where no general offensive had been attempted since trench warfare began. Our right was to rest on the river Meuse and our left in the Argonne Forest, in junction with the French who were to advance at the same time on a front as far west as Aubèrive-sur-Suippes. The British were to strike another blow toward Cambrai on the day after our blow. An Anglo-Belgian offensive in the Ypres salient was to follow theirs, which was, in turn, to be followed by another French offensive on the Aisne, while the French were to continue driving toward St. Quentin.

General Pershing was occupying the room in the Mairie of a little town where Pétain had directed the defense of Verdun and Nivelle the retaking of Fort Douaumont, and Joffre had consulted with his generals. The road that runs past the Mairie is

known as the " sacred road "—the road which saved Verdun. It had witnessed all of the grim movements of modern war that might congest any highway, the



passing of guns and troops going forward and ammunition without limit into that inferno of the hills, and the stream of ambulances for weeks on end, with their burdens of wounded who had fought under

the inspiration of Pétain's saying: "They shall not pass!"

Across the hall from General Pershing's office, the Chief of Staff of our First Army had his office, and, in the neighboring buildings, the rest of the staff which had organized the Saint Mihiel attack. Major General Liggett and the First Corps Staff, Major General Cameron and his Fifth Corps Staff, having left the divisions in the Saint Mihiel sector to other commands, had come, together with Major General Bullard and the Third Corps Staff, to apply their experience in the direction of a different set of divisions in a new operation from which we could not expect any such sensationally brilliant results as from Saint Mihiel.

Only one circumstance, the retreat of the German army from France, could ever lead us to speak of this action as a maneuver. It was to be a straight frontal attack. The German must resist our advance or endanger his line of communications to Champagne and Picardy. The area from Verdun to Holland formed the mouth of a pocket, although a broad one, for all the German army on the soil of northern France. Steady pounding from Verdun to the Argonne must be a part of any great plan which sought, whether in the hope of swift results or in the deliberate expectation of slow results, to force the German army back to German soil, or to draw reenforcements from the Rheims-Flanders line under its threat. We were striking toward the iron fields of Briey, toward Vouzièrs and the ganglia of rail connections of Mézierès. Every rod of depth which we should gain was of tactical importance. Every

prisoner we took, every German casualty we caused, meant so much pressure released from the British and the French. There was hard fighting ahead of us.

The time had come for this, as our part in the grand plan, and also the time to use our new divisions, which had been among the early arrivals in the late spring and summer rush of troops. All had had some trench experience; all had their artillery; and they had had time to adapt themselves, at least theoretically, to the staff organization for the whole which had been formed. The Eightieth, or Blue Ridge Division, under Major General Cronkhite, the Thirty-third, former National Guard of Illinois, under Major General Bell, and the Thirty-fifth, former National Guard from Missouri and Kansas, under Major General Peter E. Traub, succeeding Major General William M. Wright, who had been transferred to the command of the Eighty-ninth, had been trained with the British, as well as the Seventy-seventh. The others were the Thirty-seventh, former National Guard, under Major General Charles S. Farnsworth, from the Middle South, the Seventy-ninth, from Virginia and Maryland, under Major General Joseph E. Kuhn, and the Ninety-first, under Major General William H. Johnston, from the Pacific Northwest. Thus half of the divisions were of the draft; and only one was regular.

Secrecy, in developing this operation, was particularly essential, when we were going against strong defenses on a line which it was to the interest of the German army to defend as a part of its gen-

eral defensive plan, although it could afford, in the conservation of its forces against the repeated blows which were shaking its organization, to yield the Saint Mihiel salient. We took only two weeks for the elaborate preparations which were necessary in an area where there had been no American troops before. It appeared that we must have moved all our transport from Saint Mihiel, but with the exception of the army and corps troops, services and artillery, these were a separate gathering of motor trucks and wagons in further demonstration of how the infant American army had grown.

By day, as usual, the roads seemed normal to the aerial observer; and, by night, we were busy ants with the eyes of owls as we had been at Saint Mihiel. All the regular transport which fed the troops was kept well to the rear with them. Only ammunition and guns were moved forward in the course of forming the sinister plot against that old German front line within sight of the hills of Verdun. French and American military police and counter-espionage experts kept a sharp watch out for any suspicious persons.

What should we have done without the woods? They are nature's camouflage of war. There were stretches of woods where our guns were literally in tiers. The building of the spur track for the giant fifteen-inch, on a railroad mounting, under a fringe of trees behind a bluff, alone represented much labor. The woods also gave cover to all the infantry which had marched toward the front in the darkness. French infantry held the line in routine fashion thinly until the night before the attack, when our

eight divisions slipped into its place, almost automatically, without talking and without confusion.

The number of guns thundering in the artillery preparation, including those of the French on our left, far exceeded the number that had been firing at Saint Mihiel. In the Mairie, again host of great plans and decisions, as early bulletins were read into the map after the attack was under way, they indicated that we had broken through the line at every point and were making steady progress.

Although it was late in September and in northern France, the weather was kind to us. The sun was shining. One who went toward the front might use his glasses effectively, and he found less congestion of traffic than at Saint Mihiel, where the system of control had not been satisfactorily applied. It is General Pershing's method, when something goes wrong, to concentrate on the fault until it is remedied, and the results of this system were accordingly evident, although there will never be enough roads in any offensive to bring up transport and guns rapidly enough to satisfy the demands of an advancing army, which wants every gun and motor truck close at its heels.

When a monstrous motor truck was holding up traffic in a village street, those who were about to complain desisted as they saw that it carried a reel from which a taut wire ran heavenward to an observation balloon that the truck was towing as a boy tows a kite. It was not a good day for balloons, which are fair, large targets. A daring German aviator descending from a cloud, and successfully running the gamut of puffs of shell bursts and the rattle

of machine-gun fire from the anti-aircraft service—which is not difficult when he makes a dash with his purpose definitely in mind, considering the aggressive and praiseworthy fashion in which we were pressing our balloons close to the front to keep touch with the movement of our troops—gave the audience of transport drivers, troops in reserve and all others within view of his exploit two thrills while I was passing. Everybody looked up and nobody looked ahead, when one and then a second of these huge inflated forms, softly tugging at their wire and looking like elephants with padded ears and trunks curled up under their chins, burst into flames, after the observer had started his slow descent swinging in parabolas with the wind that gave even the spectator a sense of sea-sickness.

"The thing is to jump when you see the Boche is going to get your balloon," as a soldier said. "There's no use of jumping after your house is o fire."

The German might make raids, but the command of the air was with us. He did not persist in combat. New troops which had seen the swift, hawk-like flight of the German aviator toward his fat and helpless prey—he was brought down by one of our own planes before he reached his own lines—were also seeing maneuvers of aerial combat with the marvelous rises and glides and turns, and the "falling leaf," in transcendent curiosity which never wanes for any observer until the decision comes, either in the retreat of a combatant or his death.

It happened that I was following the Seventy-ninth Division, and by following it I could realize

the nature of the obstacles all the divisions had overcome. The sector here had been on the edges of the battle of Verdun. No Man's Land, and the area on the other side of the trenches for a depth of a mile, had been under long and furious bombardment. Shell craters were as thick as holes in a sieve. In the mist of dawn, when the soldier could not see his way clearly, he had to climb down into a crater or go around it. In either instance, his feet might slip on the wet weeds which fringed the crater, or the earth at the edge of the crater might give way.

If you are a golfer, consider taking a walk over a stretch of a mile in and out of deep golf traps whose walls have the consistence of an overhanging soft bank of a stream after a rain, and you have an idea of the ground over which the men of all our divisions had to charge, carrying their rifles, packs and rations. The enemy had plentiful barbed wire; but, with this expanse of shell craters, it would seem that this was hardly required when he might bring artillery fire and machine-gun fire to bear on the attacking infantry. The men of all the divisions, new to such hard traveling, were not delayed in their schedule by this indescribable stretch of shell-torn earth. There was evidence of carelessness in the upkeep of their trenches on the part of the Germans, either showing their confidence that no attack would ever come in this direction or deterioration in application and *morale.*

From the high ground of No Man's Land you had a broad sweep of vision. Not far away were the famous Mort Homme and Hill 304, which were in the *communiqués* in the days when the fate of the

war seemed to hang on their possession. The patches of dark weeds, speckling the bare earth of their slopes, which had been churned by shells until no sod remained, made them appear the more desolate in their silence, looking down on our young army which was carrying forward the banner of the cause of the French dead mixed with their soil. On our right, protected by the Meuse and patrols across the Meuse, the Eightieth had swept everything before it.

The highway at your feet ran toward the town of Montfauçon, perched on a hill and flanked by wooded ridges, with the remains of its church in broken columns against the sky-line—a very formidable position which the Germans had made theirs in September, 1914, when their initiative left them a choice in defenses. A year ago its taking would have been considered practicable only after a long artillery preparation. In the new warfare of movement we were to include it in a day's objective; a strange thing, there in the sight of Mort Homme for which, in a bloody wrangle under unceasing shell fire, the Germans vainly fought in many actions. It was rumored that our troops were already in Montfauçon. If we were, the fact that no shells were bursting there indicated that the Germans were not firing on us or we were not attacking, or else we held one part of the town and the enemy the other. One may form varying hypotheses of what is happening at a distance. The engineers, who, by dint of amazing industry, had already made a passable road —improving again on our Saint Mihiel offensive— through the sea of shell craters, were preparing the way for bringing up men and guns which would make

sure that Montfauçon became ours. It was the only point of the first stage of the Argonne battle that seriously arrested us in gaining our objectives.

In going forward, we passed by a machine battalion which had been halted on a turn of the road awaiting orders, and, beyond that, not even the fool and his automobile had attempted to go; for there are always officers who are disinclined to use the means of locomotion which carry forward the brave infantry whom the roads serve, and these gentlemen bring up big cars toward the front to the embarrassment of traffic. You had come to that familiar region in an army's advance beyond the guns and the transport, reserved by the interdiction of the enemy's fire to the infantry, where you may walk as freely as shells or bullets permit. The open spaces are yours. Death and courage reign over them.

Wounded men and occasional prisoners were coming across the fields. I shall not soon forget one of these wounded. The surgeon, in dressing the puncture from a bullet, had removed his blouse which hung over one shoulder, showing the white flesh of the other shoulder and his chest in contrast with the circle of tan of his neck. Tall and spare, with his helmet on his arm, the afternoon sun turned his hair to bronze and threw his definitely chiseled and really handsome features into a glowing silhouette. His back was a straight line, and his walk which had a great dignity, in keeping with the scene and the bare shoulder and breast, the drooping blouse and the helmet on his arm, suggested the very aristocracy of democracy as a fit, militant answer to the glitter in the eyes of some redoubtable Prussian officer. If

there were ever a picture of the crusader overseas it was this soldier, all unconscious of the symbolism, which we call art, in his appearance. You knew that he feared nothing that walked the earth. The pity is that Sargent could not have painted him as he was under the title of a "Modern gentleman-at-arms."

Now and then a spent bullet passed with its dying song. There were rattling bursts of machine-gun fire ahead and on the flanks. We were up against the nests again. Quite distinctly through the glasses you might see our men advancing up the slope toward the woods to the left of Montfauçon and how, when they came to the sky-line, as the machine guns began rattling, they turned to the right, keeping under cover of the crest in their enveloping movement; and on the slopes, to the east of Montfauçon, there were other figures feeling their way forward. The town was now hidden from view in the valley by a hill in front of it; and in a sunken road on the slope of the hill we found the men of a platoon concealed. They had started over the crest to be met with machine-gun fire from both flanks as well as from the town—a cross-fire hurricane. They had brought away their wounded and left their dead, and they were waiting under orders until the flanks had done their work in "pinching out" Montfauçon. With the machine bullets cracking over it the crest of the hill did not invite prolonged observation; and the tired soldiers of the platoon showed a passing curiosity when some of their number dug out three Germans who were hiding in some bushes.

This scene, typical of this kind of open fighting,

with the land untenanted except by the movement of the attacking soldiers, had a fresh interest because the soldiers were draft men. You were certain that you had only to say the word and that platoon would have charged over the crest through the hurricane and kept on going. After all the intensive theory of the training camps at home, they were having lessons that day in General Pershing's school in France where instruction is very practical. In returning to the rear you might hear the talk and the chaff of machine gunners at the bend in the road.

"They say the British are going after them today, too! Hitting 'em all along the line! That's the way. The Boche don't know which way to look for the next blow."

"What do you know about it? You've only been in the army six months!"

"Some people wouldn't learn much if they were in it for a hundred years."

"Did you read that in the *Stars and Stripes?*"

"Wonder when we're going to move. We've got a lot of ammunition here from the Springfield Arsenal to deliver to the Boche."

At Army Headquarters you might learn that we had eight thousand prisoners and less than that number of casualties, and that the French had also broken through at all points, taking the strong positions which they had faced for four years such as the Tahure and the Mesnil hills. That night there was a heavy rain, which was a blessing to the German, as it turned the new roads over the porous No Man's Land into mires for our artillery, while he was bringing up reënforcements along his established roads

to make the stand he must make in this sector. Our offensive spirit was not to hesitate in accepting the challenge.

How the men of the Seventy-seventh won their way through the maze of old works in the Argonne Forest, where I saw them cheery if soaking, and all the details of the operations of the divisions in the Argonne fighting, along with the action of the Twenty-seventh and Thirtieth divisions of the Second Corps with the British, against the Hindenburg line, must wait upon further information and become a part of a future narrative.

XXXV

AVIATION

Aviation fallacies—Not as easy to make an aeroplane as an automobile—We suffer from the affliction of seeing "big"—Debates and delays—Abundance of would-be aviators—The Liberty Motor apparently a myth—Pessimists of various shades—The Liberty Motor a success—What "mastery of the air" means—Air prospects for 1919.

MAN being more pliable than metal and his parts coördinated into the most adaptable of machines, we were to have soldiers in the trenches before we had artillery, machine guns, tanks and aeroplanes and other mechanical equipment ready for their support. In the summer of 1917, the people at home were thinking more of winning the war through the conquest of the air than through the raw recruits in our training camps. The conception of great flocks of aeroplanes dropping bombs on the enemy's roads, depots and troops called to public imagination with all the transcendency of everything associated with flight.

We appropriated a hundred million dollars for aviation. Our genius in standardization and in quantity production, which had developed our immense output in automobiles, we proposed to apply to aeroplanes. They were the means of breaking the stalemate on the Western front, the short cut to victory,

when it must take a long time to organize a great army. The submarine and tonnage limitations might never permit us to transport the army to Europe, even after it was prepared, but once we were turning out aeroplanes by the thousands, an enormous agency of destruction, requiring a small personnel and little shipping, would be more effective than scores of divisions.

The pioneers of our expedition in France knowing that aeroplanes, important as they were, could be only one part of any military force, in which the man with the fixed bayonet is the final factor in gaining and holding ground, were justly apprehensive lest the concentration of public attention on an aerial programme should divert us from the essential preparations, particularly troops and shipping. We knew, too, that of all our dreams that of the air would be slowest of fulfillment. For three years the most driving kind of necessity, which was ever the mother of invention, had had at its command the most skilled artisans and experts in Europe in the rapid improvement of aeroplane motors, while the changes in material and practice of aviation had been startling in their rapidity. No nation, however enterprising, which had not been in the war, could possibly approximate the accumulated skill and experience of the new branch, whose secrets had been rigidly kept, except after a long period of training and preparation.

Of course, the heart of aviation is the motor, and its building, not to mention the building of the plane itself, is a most delicate business. The natural life of a plane, particularly of the motor, is astonishingly

brief. A machine which requires weeks to build and weeks of trying out may be lost in its first flight.

This call for aerial supremacy was not new. It was most potent from the infantry whose *morale* was peculiarly sensitive to the inevitably capricious fluctuations of the aerial support which it received. Other publics had also been urgent for a great programme. The cry for thousands of aeroplanes to bombard the Rhine towns, yes to bombard Berlin, was heard in England, without thought that Berlin was out of range and that in reaching the capitals and great cities of the Allies, the Germans, with aerodromes on Belgian and French territory, had only short flights to their objectives. To the layman, it seemed as easy to make an aeroplane as an automobile, when, as an aviator remarked, the law of gravity had not yet been abolished.

The news reports from America in the summer and fall of 1917, exploiting for the Allied publics our own aerial preparations as something near accomplishment, were somewhat embarrassing to our pioneers of the Rue de Constantine, who knew the obstacles in the way of accomplishment. While the hundred-million-dollar fund held people under the spell of its prodigality, a most energetic officer was on the jump in and out of our headquarters in Paris in his effort to start an aerial programme in France. He had as elaborate blue prints as any of the engineers of the S. O. S., which were of the same bold spirit. We heard of him flying over Verdun one day, and in Flanders the next, and the next down on the fields at Issoudun, where we were to build an aviation city. The very spirit of flight was in him; and he

seemed to be propelled by the dynamic force of an aeroplane motor.

Other officers of aviation, who ranked him, arrived from the States, and they had the same volatile, hurrying characteristics. Aviation was the branch *d'élite,* which moved in a soaring and technical world of its own, mystifying to outsiders, who held it in the awe which is associated with the romance of the "ace," who travels at one hundred and fifty miles an hour as he engages his adversary ten thousand feet above the earth, as compared with the mortal who advances by arduously pulling first one foot and then the other out of the mud of communication trenches.

Our aviation band established great offices in Paris, where everybody was working under furious pressure and cars waited at the door, and a stranger felt something of the awkwardness of the man who finds that he must have mistaken his street and number when he is ushered in among the guests of a dinner party to which he was not invited. When you looked over the blue prints at that busy aviation headquarters it was not quite good form to ask "How many planes have you?" although the question might bring the frank answer, "We have nothing but hopes, promises, money and energy." As well inquire how many Browning machine guns had arrived.

In no branch did that American characteristic of seeing "big" in the period of conception suffer more from the affliction of the period when accomplishment was impatiently expected. We were preparing on paper, at least, to receive, to assemble and to fly

the Liberty planes, for one thing; and for another, which was more to the point, we were trying to prepare with something more substantial than paper, for a sufficient aerial squadron to support our divisions when they should go into the trenches. If we had no planes of our own make we should buy them from the Allies. This really meant, at first sight, only supplying personnel for French, British or Italian planes, without increasing the number of planes in the air, but it was the only way to bring a force of our own into being as the nucleus for further development.

We sought the best and latest types, of course. This involved debates, subject to the rapid improvements which superseded the type which was best one month with another type the next. If I were to become technical, at the expense of generalization, my task would have only begun with the study of the sheafs of cablegrams to and from Washington, in which the details about one motor took as much space as the requisition of enough material to build a regulating station.

At least, we should not want for personnel. Apparently, all the American ambulanciers in France were bent upon becoming aviators. Every senior officer in the army knows how numerous are his young friends who think that they are particularly suited to become fliers. At home, we had the choice of hundreds of thousands of youths who were convinced that the air was their natural element when they looked skyward after a hard day's drill in the infantry camps. It is never necessary to draft men into aviation. The call is that of a knighthood rid-

ing the clouds on your own steed, with your own inclination your guide, and with death coming cleanly in the very exhilaration of immortal flight in the heavens.

You rise in princely isolation from the aerodrome after your machine is made ready by your attendants. When you return they run out in the field to take charge of it, while you go to your bath and a good meal. All the world regards you as the romantic type of war. It is quite different from being a lieutenant of infantry, who must see that his platoon does not suffer too much from "cooties," keep up the spirits of his men in the course of infinite drudgery of detail, charge machine-gun nests, lie out all night in damp woods, hug reeking ditches for cover under gas and high explosives, face death in unclean and unromantic forms and take his "rest" out of the line in the chilly room of a village house, perhaps next door to a pig-sty.

The Allies hospitably received our cadets into their schools until we had our own schools, where we used older types of Allied planes for training. We had fliers in Italy as well as with the French and British, and we waited for the delivery of Allied planes which had been ordered. The Italian defeat on the Isonzo, the collapse of Russia and all the accompanying strain on the Allied armies, meant that promises, which are ever subject in war to its vicissitudes, could not be kept, while all the news from home led the cynical to exclaim when the penetrating cold of winter was in their marrow: "There's a lot of talk—but what's coming of it?"

The prospects for the realization of the great

aerial programme were not encouraging. Not only were the Liberty motors not appearing, but the gossip of the dark-blue pessimists said that they were a complete failure, while the light-blue pessimists, being more cheerful, said that they would be ready after the war. What could we expect? both declared in one voice. According to report, we had sophomorically called some experts together and directed them to assemble the best parts of other motors and make a perfect motor. Did not these enthusiasts know that all machines were the result of long experiments? You could not produce a motor from blue print forms. To tell the truth, the Liberty motor became pretty nearly a joke with the Expeditionary Forces. Meanwhile, the Germans, driven to their utmost efforts, with no Russian front to look after, were producing aeroplanes at a rate which was as disturbing as their concentrations of divisions for their spring offensive. Their hope of a decision included overwhelming forces in the air, as well as on the earth, in action before either our aeroplanes or troops arrived in large numbers.

Pessimism in this branch, as in every other, eased the minds of our workers, who never paused in their unremitting industry. The school at Issoudun had come into being and other schools also. Those veteran fliers of the Lafayette Escadrille, who had had an *esprit de corps* of their own, with sentimental attachment to their old associations yielding to patriotic desire, had become a part of the American aviation force. Their experience, under the leadership of Raoul Lufbery, was of great service, when all the long preparation and anticipation had its

first practical expression in aerodromes behind our own Toul sector, from which Americans were flying in machines bought from the Allies in *liaison* with our infantry in as professional a manner as the French aviators. In command in the field was that strenuous pioneer of the early days, who was later to become the chief of aviation of our First Army; while Major General Mason M. Patrick, with his main office at Tours, had become the Chief of the organization which was to expand with a rapidity during the summer in keeping with all the other parts of our army in France.

When the first Liberty motor was received in the spring of 1918, the news spread fast through the whole army. Never had any single bit of mechanism assumed such importance in the world unless it was the first plane Wilbur Wright brought to Europe or the first wireless apparatus. How was the child which had been so long in borning? Was it bow-legged and cross-eyed? Did it have scrofula and hip disease? After all the months of exploitation what sort of product had the hundred-million-dollar programme brought forth? We were prepared to be critical; our faith had become attenuated. Accordingly, the reports that you heard by the wayside were not encouraging. The dark blues, depending upon hearsay, said that, barring some twenty or thirty faults, the Liberty was all right, while the light blues reduced the number of faults to ten or fifteen in order to keep up their reputation as cheerful prophets.

Happily, the pessimists were now as wrong as the optimists had been a year before when they were

to hide the Rhine from the sun with the sweep of our flotillas. The Liberty was used for the first time by our air forces in the Marne battle. It had faults, to be remedied, as every motor has, but it was declared an undoubted success for the purpose for which it was designed.

There had never been any intention on the part of its sponsors that it would be used in the single-seater, fighting plane, but the object in its creation was to produce a standardized motor of one type for two-seated observation planes and for day and night bombing planes. Its speed was such, nevertheless, that the experts said that it could run away from practically any German single-seater in the air in the fall of 1918.

We were to continue to depend upon the developed types of the Allies for combat and pursuit. In turn, we were to supply them with the Liberties for observation and bombing. This was the plan, from the start, in coördinating Allied aircraft production, which, after many vicissitudes, and after delays which need not be mentioned here, had its fulfillment. The British and French and Italian aviation services, after the exhibition of the Liberty's efficiency, were eager for every one that we could make.

In the Saint Mihiel and the Argonne operations, the number of our planes was in keeping with the manifestation of our power in guns, if not in troops, as the army family assembled, while the fact that we had partly to depend upon French planes was again significant of the truth of the first sentence of this chapter. The frequent passing of the bull's-eye

with a white center, painted on the under side of the lower wings, which meant that the plane was American, was a delight to the eyes of hundreds of thousands of men, and the identification of the Liberties among our aerial forces one of the new diversions of everybody at the front and at the rear. Once the stream of output was started from home the thing was to keep it ever increasing until our preponderance in the air was overwhelming. "Mastery of the air" is a common phrase. There has never been any such thing as complete mastery of the air, if by this it is meant that the enemy aviators may not pass over an imaginary line in the air drawn over the battle line. At any time that either side has a definite object in crossing into enemy territory this can be accomplished by the sudden rush of a concentration of planes, in which the observer is protected by fighting planes. We were strong enough in the air, in the autumn of 1918, to keep the German over his own lines as a rule, but not to prevent his reconnaissances or, of course, night bombing. A patrol of a hundred thousand aeroplanes would hardly accomplish this on the long Western front.

Early in his offensive of 1918, the German had as many planes as the Allies, if not more; and when he used them over our lines he came in force to gain his ends. Otherwise, he remained at home. Fighting for fighting's sake, although it is spectacular and makes "aces," may be bad tactics. One day, when our aviators saw that a German plane, under convoy of fighting planes, evidently carried a photographic apparatus, they did the right thing by concentrating

successfully on the destruction of the recording eye that would take home a picture of our dispositions. German aviation has been intensely practical; and the Allied aim in the autumn of 1918 was the same.

The principal development of the year's aerial campaign had been in the value of such concentrations; in the use of machine guns from aeroplanes flying low against infantry and transport which, on occasion, had forced generals to leave their cars and dodge around trees and rocks to escape the wheeling pursuit of an aviator; and also in the increase of bombing. A hundred and fifty pound bomb is just as destructive as a hundred and fifty pound shell. The ruins of some towns, which were back of the lines out of the reach of shell fire, were evidence enough that aerial bombing was now a serious factor. The big British Handley-Page machines had worked havoc on German communications, and our Liberty motors were meant for such work. Thus the great aerial offensive which was widely advertised upon our entry into the war was another prospect which the Germans had to face along with the certainty that in the spring of 1919, the Allies would have double the number of aeroplanes the Germans could possibly produce.

Should anyone question that our aviators would be equal to their task? It seems idle to dwell on the point. Our ardor in the air, as on the earth, was in contrast with the weariness of the other armies which had fought for four years. They had drawn on their reserves of youth. We had the pick of our fresh reserves. Our talent for flying was a part with our

baseball and football and national characteristics. Our aviators, who had the luck to be among the first to fly in France, were urged on to exploits by the very pressure of the long waiting list of ambitious aspirants.

XXXVI

THE GREAT PROJECT REALIZED

Vast growth of our plant in France—Ferrying of soldiers across the Atlantic made systematic—New troops in France met on every side by American foresight—Pooling of Allied resources —We are everywhere in France—France prospering in war-time—Effect of America in France on the French and the British—The Y. M. C. A.—Incalculable improvement of army conditions over Spanish-American war days—Good care of our soldiers—Chaplains of different faiths—Our debt to General Pershing—Final and complete victory in sight.

ALL the effort which links the weeks and months together makes the Rue de Constantine in Paris seem very far away. As we look backward to those cramped headquarters, which held our promise of practical aid to the Allies, we better understand what must have been the thoughts in those days of the Allied statesmen and generals who concealed their apprehensions as they placed their hope in us. A year later, we had immense hotels as our offices for the mere incidental business of the rear of our organization which must be conducted in Paris, and all their activity, with their American telephones and card-index systems, seemed a commonplace of development from the plans that had their origin in the Rue de Constantine.

No one observer could any longer compass our progress unless he traveled in an aeroplane and his

eyes could see through the roofs of buildings and into the hearts and brains of men, while his mind correlated observations and information which he could express with a genius worthy of his subject. The S. O. S. had grown prodigiously through the spring and summer months, with tonnage striving to keep pace with increased demands. Old regulating stations had doubled in size; new ones and new depots were being built. Long lines of quays were finished; the time of "turn around" of shipping had been reduced until it was largely in keeping with the expectations of an improving organization and the installation of labor-saving devices.

Our navy blue had become as common in the ports as our khaki in inland towns. Ships brought us supplies through the Straits of Gibraltar as well as to the western ports of France. We spoke to one another over our own cables under the seas to England as well as over the wires which ran across country on the poles we had set. We had written clearly and in infinite detail upon Mr. Baker's sheet of white paper. We had kept on overflowing from province to province until the outposts of our extending world were looking out on the Mediterranean as well as on the Swiss border.

The soldiers of a division, from the time that they were put on the train at their home camps, east, west, north or south, now moved with something of the facility of a passenger who checked his baggage from Chicago through to London by fast trains and steamers in the old days. They went on board ship where a system was established as the result of months of experience; they approached a port in France,

under a convoy of destroyers which also knew their part from experience, and, arriving in the port, they found that they were in the presence of American docks, lighters and cranes and American officers and mechanics and stevedores. They were disembarked as promptly as they had been embarked; and at every point, after they landed, someone was on hand to tell the commanders where to go and what to do, without any further worry on their part until they were in a billeting area, where they had to be acclimatized after the close quarters of their voyage, and their programme of training had been issued to them.

If freight piled up on quays, if cars crowded sidings the driving word "Must!" was one which would allow no peace in the time of war to those responsible for delay until the difficulty was overcome. The pooling of resources, British, French, Italian and American, had ceased to be a theory of conferences and had become a practical matter for governing bodies. The great storage warehouses for shells and explosives or for machine guns were none too large. Shells and explosives were arriving in huge quantities. At the front, you heard the urgent calls for the Browning machine gun, one of our efforts at "the best" which had been long in materializing, but it had the verdict of approval of those judges who face the enemy.

Our big hospital trains, which had been ready when hard fighting began, as they bore their burdens of sick and wounded to the great hospitals, which had also been ready, were a touching and appealing proof of the wisdom of the S. O. S. project to the

French population. We had settled into the life of the country, we had crowded the towns of central and southern France with our offices as well as the villages of eastern France with the billeting of our soldiers. We were everywhere in France, as I have said, and always busy, drilling, building, planning, forwarding supplies, organizing, cutting lumber and wood from the forests, repairing railroads and rolling stock and laying new telegraph lines.

With the British army and ours, France had on her own soil more able-bodied men in her support than in her own army. She had seen the energy of our distant new land, known to her people through photographs, hearsay and news dispatches, reflective of our sensational and bizarre doings rather than our reality, develop under her eyes; and our character, associated with summer tourists sometimes raucous and boastful on a holiday, as intense, restlessly industrious and determined. She had seen us as we are when we are at work at home, which is the only true way of seeing any nation. We had seen the French also at home and at work, when their supposed volatility changed to grim persistence in face of discouragement, and we had seen the British in their most gloriously stubborn moments. We had seen both when the sight of our battalions rallied their hopes against the German offensives; and, then, in the supreme happiness—the happiness of a man who thinks that he must be in a dream and puts out his hand questioningly to feel of reality—of driving the foe beyond the old trench line toward the frontier of Germany.

America, which had accumulated money in the

first three years of the war, set the flow of gold, which we had received from France, and particularly from England, for their purchases in our markets, back to France in the sums which our soldiers spent and our army spent for supplies. France was winning, and France prospered after her long period of economic strain. With another two years of war, the land without gold mines, which had become the world's battle ground, would become the world's banker of gold. Europe, which had formerly regarded us as money grubbers, which had spoken of America as the land of the Almighty Dollar, saw us disregarding money, submitting to heavy taxes, a people of sentiment offering our lives, including men with names that were German and Hungarian, for the principle that brought us into the war.

To the French, who are not a traveled people, we brought some of the effects of travel; to the islanders of England we joined with the Canadians, Australians and New Zealanders in bringing the wide, generous vistas of continents across the salty wisdom of the seas. The educational process was mutual. We learned the meaning of intensive civilization with its traditions and half-tones and its skill in making much of little, which we may apply when we return home. The narrow-minded and the profiteer found us foolishly extravagant, but the sounder people saw us as generous, bustling, impulsive and genuine, if we were matter-of-fact, which is compliment enough. Neither the French nor the British, unless it were a class—that class of parasites of money in time of peace, and blood and money on the body politic in time of war—expected us to bear their

burdens. On their part, there was no thought of resting on their arms while we charged. The Allies went into the great counter-offensive of 1918 with the spirit and courage of youth regained, unafraid of the cost in lives.

Each one of the atoms of the Expeditionary Force was so preoccupied with his work that only time will make him realize to the full the wonder of our pilgrimage and of all that we have wrought in France. Be it at General Headquarters, or in the offices, the camps, the stations and the ports of the S. O. S., or with our troops in their training and in their battles, the romance of our activity on the background where we labored would sometimes occur to tired men, and the thought of being even the smallest factor in one of the great movements of history would bring fresh strength to weary mind and body to meet the day's problems.

America in France was America at its best, the best of our men and women. I am thinking of the women of the auxiliary associations. They had their jealousies and their grievances, but these were gradually submerged in a common purpose as responsibility and elimination worked their results. There is the example of a certain Y. M. C. A. woman, which is illuminating if not strictly characteristic. When she first came to France it was easy to see that she had lived in a little local world in which she thought well of herself and a good deal about herself. Her time had been given to trivial things which, in her orbit, assumed grave importance. Servants did everything for her except to breathe and complain. By nature, I should say that she was what is called cat-

tish; but a few weeks of selling cigarettes and chocolate to the soldiers and of answering their simple boyish questions had transformed her into a cheerful, objective being. She had been receiving a primary education in the humanities at the age of thirty in the school of Mr. Carter, that remarkable man, who had been the pioneer organizer of the Y. M. C. A. in the trying early days, and with a soldierly zeal and endurance continued on through the later days of its widespread, invaluable and difficult service. The process which wrought the change in her had been going on among European women for three years. It would have been unfortunate, in our preparation for the future, to have missed this course of training in self-sacrifice.

It was a privilege, not a duty, to be in France for all except the trained soldiers and a few specialists, whatever they paid for the experience. Those who served at home served no less well, and they deserve even more praise as a reward for what they missed. Each day had its reminder that it was the other "over there" which gave us our life blood. The causes of our accomplishment go further back than our entry into the war. They are not alone in the Declaration of Independence, or in laws, or political platforms, but in that modern movement two or three decades old; for, such as a nation's character is in its men and women in time of peace, so it is under the acid test of war.

To all the colleges and schools and to all their teachers; to every man and woman who held to the ethics of service in his occupation, whether laborer or millionaire; to those leaders who strove for bet-

ter government, commercial honesty and improved commercial organization; to the pioneers and the workers in trying to make understanding and worthy citizens of the lowly of Europe who came to our doors, whether Jew or Gentile, brown-skinned from the Mediterranean or Viking blond from the North Sea; to that popular sentiment, which never casts reflection on any man's origin or asks his caste; to all Americans with their faces in the light before the war, as well as to the regular officers, who worked hard and truly at their profession and held cleanly to its best traditions, we owe that revelation of America in France which should make it unnecessary in the future for the traveler to explain to foreigners the meaning and aim of all that was brewing in the melting-pot which is called the United States, neighbor of gallant Canada, along a frontier which has no forts.

When one recalls Spanish-American war days, and he thinks of what might have happened to us in this war, he must pay another tribute to that modern movement in the men whom it brought to leadership and to a direction of policy, which, at the same time that it left an expert's task to expert, gave us an influence in the world which we may use in keeping with our ideals. The supreme tribute is to the man who fights; to the soldier who, after the war, would hold all the future in his hands. The insurance system ought to save his dependents from a pension system and himself from the political activity of veterans' associations, which vote in a block, in disregard of the strict views of the duties of citizenship.

Mothers, sisters and sweethearts always wanted to

know how the men they loved were cared for in France. Three thousand miles are three thousand miles when the soldier is away from home. The distance as I have mentioned removed the sense of personal touch that British, French and Italian relatives have with their kindred fighting across the Channel, or in another province of their own country; and this distance meant submarine dangers, a long line of communications for our supplies, and our men being crowded upon transports which disappeared over the horizon on a long absence, perhaps never to return. Mothers might be sure that sons in France never wanted for food, good substantial American food, thanks to the S. O. S. They might be equally sure that there were good nurses, good surgeons and good hospitals for the sick and wounded. If, to the French, soldiering in their own country, our arrangements seemed luxurious, why, it was only right that they should be for men who were enduring the hardships and risks of battle three thousand miles from home. For there were hardships in face of the enemy which might not be glossed over. Such is war, and especially in a war where all the power and resource of modern destruction were directed against human flesh. It was a man's work being a soldier in France. There was discipline, too; and it was good for us that we should have it.

When he was not in the battle line, many a son was living a far more regular and healthier life than at home; his means of entertainment were more wholesome in that army world than they were in many instances at home. When he returned more

than one mother would exclaim to her boy: "How strong and well you look!" All that the funds which the other "over there" supplied were being used by the auxiliary associations, the Red Cross, the Y. M. C. A. and the K. of C. to make him feel at home—in conjunction with an army which took the tired man at Blois, issued him a new suit of clothing throughout and told him he had only to rest until his number was called. He had a better club around at the "Y" hut, where he saw the "movies"—where all of us "movie fans" went when we had the time—and where he could read the paper and see the Sunday supplements, than he had in many instances in his own village; and there he associated, as he did in the ranks, on an equal footing with the millionaires who won attention by enlisting as privates. A millionaire counted as one private, no more and no less, in the A. E. F., with a chance to be promoted corporal if he were proved efficient, and without having his name appear in the *Stars and Stripes*, which did not carry a "What Society is Doing" column.

We thank those men in khaki whose rank was in the silver cross or the emblem of an older faith, that they wore under Bishop Brent. They brought the human ethics of their calling at its best, it seemed to me, instead of dogmatic instruction, to serve in France; and, under fire, they were cool exemplars of "the blood of the martyr is the seed of the church." It was good to see clergyman and priest working under a rabbi or a Salvation Army chaplain, all in the one purpose which the war has made supreme. We thank the men and the women, and particularly

the women, from the home stage who did the circuit of the huts, bringing us the latest hits across the submarine zone. They had their reward in appreciative audiences which formed a laughing and clapping sea of khaki, from the boys who sat cross-legged at the edge of the platform to those crowding in at the rear door; and we are grateful, too, to the officers who tried to accomplish more rapid delivery of the tons of letters from home.

Here was a problem to break any organizer's reputation. When a division was transferred from billets in Champagne to the Saint Mihiel sector, where the regiment was sent into action, and after action to Alsace, with all the changes of station subject to orders that are given on short notice, as the result of the sudden requirements of battle, it could hardly be expected that a letter for Captain Smith or Private Jones of the Three Hundredth Regiment, which arrived in France in the course of the rapid movement, would be delivered him in the front line under a barrage, or even awaiting him at his destination, or at the dressing station if he were wounded. War is not a settled postal route, and we had three hundred thousand soldiers a month arriving in France and divisions continually in transit. But the mail service kept improving, and everything else kept improving as the millions which had been hurriedly gathered became more and more organized.

The final tribute, the tribute which one reserves to accompany that to the soldier in his courage and his philosophy, goes to the stalwart leader who found the strength for his task in the inspiration of its magnitude and of all the influences of our democracy

which I have mentioned. Otherwise, no human system could have borne the strain which was his. An army requires an autocrat. We needed a man in France who was a combination of iron will, broad views, the ability of a great commander and the human impulses which we like, and the man appeared. First of all a soldier, he was more than a soldier in his comprehension of the requirements for forming new soldiers into an efficient military machine. He was sent to Europe to make war; and he prepared to make war in no uncertain manner. He had imagination and the force of conviction to make his visions come into being, whether it was the training of combat divisions, the forming of a staff, or the establishment of schools, or the plan of the S. O. S. which strong influences on the European side of the Atlantic opposed until time had demonstrated its wisdom.

Inquiry ever stands at the roadside of accomplishment. Captious observers who agreed that he had proved himself an organizer might doubt if the soldier from the Mexican border was equal to the command of an immense force in modern action. He confounded such vagrant skepticism in a single action. Unaffected by the plaudits for Saint Mihiel, in characteristic prevision, with the task finished, he took up the next in the direction of his young army which must be developed and hardened out of fresh divisions rushed across the Atlantic on packed transports until it represented the full power of the nation.

The autumn of 1918 saw the Germans still on French soil. We might look forward to hard fight-

ing and to paying the cost in blood, which we must be prepared to pay, before we drove the German army toward the Rhine and final defeat on German soil, should the remaining German man-power still be capable of desperate resistance. With the mighty machinery of supply now formed, with the immense forces of aeroplanes, of tanks and artillery back of our growing army being assembled during the winter, supported by a united people who were guided by the inspiration of a cause whose irresistible strength was penetrating into the mind of a baffled foe was written clear for all to read—the complete victory which civilization required.

We came to France without consideration of any gain, which all men might not share, and with reverent appreciation of how bravely the Allies had fought for four years for the principles which we had had at stake. In the light of that thought we did our building. It was an unconquerable thought; one of the greatest world thoughts of all time.

THE END